THE AMERICAN LEGION

DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA, INC.

******

SUMMER CONVENTION

REGULAR SESSION

5TH DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (DEC) MEETING

GRAND CASINO & RESORT, 777 GRAND CASINO BOULEVARD

SHAWNEE, OKLAHOMA 74804

July 11, 2025

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(Meeting called to order at 15:00 hours.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: People, come to order. Please rise for the Colors and remain standing with your caps removed and placed over your heart for the opening prayer, through the POW/MIA ceremony and the Pledge of Allegiance.

With our Colors in place, HAND, SALUTE; TWO.

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: Let us pray.

Oh, Mighty God, we are thankful today to be able to gather together with men and women of sound minds and grateful hearts, for the freedom we share as Americans today. Help us in this meeting to able to not only take care of the present but prepare for the future in all decisions that are made.

We ask these things in Christ's name. Amen.

COLLECTIVE GROUP: Amen.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: At this time, I will need a vote for a sergeant-at-arms. Ed Lager will not be here today due to some personal issues that he has. I would like to recommended that Chris Sherbourne and Tyler Rector be assistant and adjutant-at-arms for the rest of the ceremony.

All in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same

sign.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Nay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Nay.

PDC MARTIN: Is there any discussion about --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Well, that's what we're about to have right now.

Does anybody have anything they want to say?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do that before the vote.

PDC MARTIN: Yeah. They should not be in here during executive session.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Now, you do understand that Tyler is also a veteran. So, at the request orf me or the DEC, he can. Now, Chris Sherbourne is not a veteran and, therefore, that would apply to him.

DEC REP BLOXOM: If he's not a member of the Executive Committee, he cannot attend an executive session.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: But I can ask for him to be here, as that's one of the privileges of the chairman.

MR. MCNEAL: That's correct.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: So, at this time then, Chris Sherbourne, will you please place the POW/MIA flag on the chair, please?

The POW/MIA empty chair is placed at all official

meetings of the American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of Americans and POWs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America. This is a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who have died bravely in the defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those missing. Let us rededicate ourselves to this vital endeavor.

Place the POW/MIA flag on the empty chair.

(WHEREUPON, the POW/MIA chair cover was placed.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We'll have a moment of silence.

(WHEREUPON, a moment of silence was observed by all.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

At this time, we will do the Pledge of Allegiance.

(WHEREUPON, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Please be seated.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Preamble.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Preamble.

Does anyone need to take a break before we continue any further?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Preamble.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Well, my skit says to take a break if we need to. That's why I asking. We're going to follow the skit.

No break? All right.

All rise.

(WHEREUPON, the preamble of the American Legion Constitution was recited by all.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Please be seated.

Adjutant, can you do roll call, please?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: With your permission, I am going to remain seated. It has been a long day for me.

Senior Vice Commander Woody Alexander.

DEPARTMENT SV COMMANDER ALEXANDER: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Vice Commander East Patricia Mathes-Kerr.

DEPARTMENT VC EAST MATHES-KERR: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Vice Commander West Shirley May.

DEPARTMENT VC WEST MAY: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Chaplain Bobby Stewart.

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Finance Officer Sam McPherson.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: Present.
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Judge Advocate Dale Haynes.
DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Present.
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Historian Wayne Flowers.
DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN FLOWERS: Present.
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Sergeant-at-arms Ed Lager is excused.
Surgeon John Loose.
DEPARTMENT SURGEON LOOSE: Present.
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Adjutant Rick Redden, present.
NEC Committeeman Charlie O'Leary.
NEC O'LEARY: Present.
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Alternate NEC Michael Taylor.
ALTERNATE NEC TAYLOR: Present.
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Department Rep for the Oklahoma Veterans Commission Brett Martin.
ODVC REP MARTIN: Present.
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 1A Commander Karen Ritter.
DISTRICT COMMANDER RITTER: Present.
DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 1B

Commander Karen Cruice.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 2A Commander Kayla Rector.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RECTOR: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 2B Commander Ken Rose. Ken has departed.

Has there been a replacement named for Ken?

DEPARTMENT VC EAST MATHES-KERR: No replacement. The position is vacant.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 3A Commander Gary Pierson.

DISTRICT COMMANDER PIERSON: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 3B Commander Jack Sikes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 4 Commander Thomas Snodgrass.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SNODGRASS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 5A Commander Mike Harris.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 5B Commander Eric Grubbs.

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 6A Commander Greg Bower.

DEPARTMENT FIRST VC DEVENITCH: Mike Devenitch filling in.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 6B Commander James Rees.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 7 Commander Elmo May.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 8A Commander Joe Kingery.

DISTRICT COMMANDER KINGERY: Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 8B Commander Wayne Flowers has already responded. Thank you.

District 1A Rep Debbie Gordon.

DEC REP CONN: Not yet. That will be Rich Conn.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Is that a permanent --

DEC REP CONN: No. Debbie will be DEC 1. This is my last DEC.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 1B Ron Bunch.

DEC REP BUNCH: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 2A Jim Quinn.

DEC REP QUINN: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 2B Curtis Deer.

DEC REP DEER: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 3A David Seyler. David Seyler.

District 3B Boyd Mayo. Boyd Mayo.

Am I correct with these last two, with the names?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Negative.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Well, who is it?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Today it's Amanda Kern.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is she here?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Haven't seen her.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Neither is Boyd Mayo.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Amanda is supposed to be which position?

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: DEC.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'm sorry. For which?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: A or B?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: 3B.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Okay.

DEC REP KUNTZE: Commander, can we speak louder for the stenographer, please? The sidebar conversations are not getting recorded.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 3A is absent.

District 3B is absent.

District 4 Representative John Bloxom.

DEC REP BLOXOM: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 5A Representative Melvin Hopkins.

DEC REP HOPKINS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 5B Representative Danny Thomas.

DEC REP THOMAS: Here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 6A Representative Don Kuntze.

DEC REP KUNTZE: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 6B Representative Larry Watson. Larry Watson.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Absent.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 7 Doug Hale.

DEC REP HALE: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: And Doug should get the award for the guy who got here from the hardest road.

What was it, Friday, Doug?

DEC REP HALE: Tuesday.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Tuesday. Doug had a heart attack, and here he is.

(Applause.)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 8A Representative Tina Kilmer.

DEC REP KILMER: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: District 8B Jack Day.

DEC REP DAY: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Are there any past department commanders present? Please acknowledge yourselves or tell us you're here.

PDC O'LEARY: Charlie O'Leary, Post 142, Hominy.

PDC QUINN: Jim Quinn, Post 20, Fort Gibson.

PDC TAYLOR: Michael Taylor, Post 12, Bethany-Warr Acres.

PDC BLOXOM: John Bloxom, Post 126, Bristow.

PDC MARTIN: Brett Martin, Post 12.

PDC KUNTZE: Don Kuntze, Post 353.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'm sure I missed one. Charlie O'Leary, Jim Quinn, John Bloxom, Don Kuntze, Brett Martin.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Mike Taylor.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Did I miss something (laughter)?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Mike Taylor.

(Laughter)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Department Commander Hayden Woods.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Present.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Commander, we have a quorum.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

At this time, I would like to introduce a special guest that we have with us today. We have National Vice Commander James Kellogg from the Midwest Division.

(Applause.)

NATIONAL VC KELLOGG: Good afternoon. I'll reserve comments for tomorrow, but it's wonderful to see all these Legionnaires here. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The National Convention will be held in Tampa Bay, Florida, August 22nd through the 28th. As we go through our spring district meetings, think about who needs to be sent to our National Convention.

At this time, I will also remind you to silence your cell phones. Turn off any devices. If you do have them, I have several gentlemen that will be collecting money,

because we need it bad. So, if you want to start texting people to find out if their cell phones are on, go for it.

(Laughter)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: At this time, I will call for any committee report from each post or one of our committees at the Department level. Limit your reports to ten minutes, to include awards, activities, and membership status.

If there are none, we will continue on.

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Are there any members campaigning for higher office? If so, stand in place to be recognized. You have five minutes to introduce yourself and state the office in which you are seeking.

(WHEREUPON, multiple people stood up.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We will start up front.

Karen Ritter.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RITTER: My name is Karen Ritter. I'm the 1A District Commander, and I am running for Vice Commander East.

My platform is communication. We are lacking it severely across the board, and I would like to improve

that. Patricia Kerr started a chat group with us via text, and I'm going to expand upon that. Besides just going to the district commanders, it's going to go to the adjutants as well. Communication will help us bring our membership up as well. So that's what I'm going to do. I want to make a better department than what we've seen in the past. I'm committed. I'm dedicated to the American Legion.

That's all I've got to say for now.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Legionnaire Karen Cruice.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, 1B, also running for Vice Commander East. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I wasn't prepared for this.

I also am running on a "better communication." I think that we need a positive spin on what we're doing. We're doing amazing things in our state, even though so often we don't hear that. We hear what we're not doing.

At the post levels, we had 150 percent growth, and I think the entire state could do that. I know that membership isn't the East, but it's a start. And I think that praising in public needs to be our entire state's mission. There are so many awards and things that we leave on the table that we don't know that we're five members away from or five people away from.

My district, along with Karen, partnered together, we have a Facebook where it's District 1 because we want Sons and Auxiliary to be part of that. So, even though at the post level we have an A and a B, we took that out, and we run a District 1 Facebook page where everyone can post into it and share the greatness that we are, and we encourage it at our own district levels, and we need to do that higher. We need to have a Facebook for East and West. We need to have one at the senior leadership positions, and that's something we'll extend. We also do it at our post level where we have a family post, at 17, Facebook, and again, everyone posts, and everyone celebrates one another. And that's what we want.

People want to know "Why should we join a group that has got so much infighting?" because that's what they've seen in the past. And it's our job as senior leadership to get out there and say, "That's not what it's all about." We've got some really positive things, and we need to expand on that.

I've also held the position for three years, and I'm going into my fourth year as the VE&E and went to D.C. and campaigned on legislation. And I want to continue that as a teacher in the public school -- not in the public -- in the private school system. And my husband's a public school teacher and a former Marine. I think

that it's important that we do education and we do employment. As a mother of a child that is getting out of Air Force soon and going to the Task Program, I can speak on that, and I want to continue doing that and growing.

I think that Oklahoma has so much opportunity, and when you're at the bottom, it's so easy to go up, and we have to make our people know that they're heard and that they're encouraged and that service officers is our primary focus.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Legionnaire Danny Gross.

MR. GROSS: Hello. My name is Daniel Gross. I'm running for Vice Commander East.

Along with my fellow colleagues here, I do think communication is the key. Continuing education on all the district commanders is going to be key. But one of the things that I want to do that's a little bit different is I want to go visit the posts that aren't coming to our DEC meetings, that aren't coming to our district meetings. And when you have a district conference, and you have four posts show up out of 12, I want to know what happened to the others. I want to go visit them personally. I want to spend some time. That

is my goal.

I think as a small post past commander that I can lift up little posts and let them realize that you don't need to be mad at the state anymore. You can come in. Your vote matters.

Thank you.

MR. LARSON: Yes. My name's Lance Larson. I'm from Stillwater, Post 129.

This year we have lost practically 2,300 members. Is that acceptable? No, it is not. So I have a plan to turn the West around. Do we try to do it all at once? No, we don't. We have to work one step at a time. Are we going to do that in one year? No, we're not. We have to take it slow, get the communication back, and get all the posts even with each other, and go from there.

Now, also in the West, we have a big-time VSO problem in a major way. So, what I've done, I got a team of people waiting to work for it to get some of this stuff fixed. It's going to be a long haul, but I think we can get it done.

I've had a lot of roadblocks I've had to jump this spring, but I will keep jumping them.

But, guys, we've all, if we don't like each other or whatever, we've all got one goal: That's coming together and working for the good of the Legion. That's the

bottom line.

Okay. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Legionnaire Shirley May.

DEPARTMENT VC WEST MAY: Hi. I'm Shirley May. I'm the Vice West Commander, presently. I have held multiple positions at my post, 146, in Sayre, Oklahoma. We are a small post by Legion standards. However, what I plan on working on this year, if elected, would be communication across the state, not just the west side or the east side, but across the state. We all have to work together. We all have to come together to make this the Legion that we know it can be.

As Senior Vice, membership is a big issue, and my goal for this year is to retain the members we have. Our retention numbers have been down. They've fallen every year for a few years now, and so I would like to work on retaining those that we have. We can recruit, but we've got to retain the people that we have that haven't been actively involved.

If you need assistance, I'll be glad to come to your posts and help if you ask, but I won't know if you don't ask.

So, again, thank you for the opportunity to speak.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Legionnaire Kayla

Rector.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RECTOR: Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Kayla Rector. I'm the District 2A Commander, currently.

A little bit about myself: I've held various positions at my post. I'm the District 2A Commander, sat on the National Legislative Council, National VA&R Council.

I'm running for the position of Senior Vice Commander for the Department of Oklahoma. If elected, communication: I know we heard it from everybody today, and I can't tell you how many people this week so far have brought that up.

I've had so many people talk about "We need to see senior leadership in our posts," because we're not seeing it. We're not seeing -- you know, it may be a small thing to us. Logging on to MyLegion may be an easy thing for us, but we have so many posts that can't do those things because their leadership is not involved with what they have going on.

And so, I would like to spend as much time as possible in these posts, connecting with these members, just sitting down and having the conversations for hours at a time if need be. I spent three hours at one of my posts the other day just talking, getting to know these

people more, helping them with the problems that they have, and that's what we need.

And I am honored to be a part of this team '25-'26 that we have going, and we hope to work together, regardless of how Sunday may come about, and move this department forward.

So, I appreciate the time. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Alternate NECman Michael Taylor.

ALTERNATE NEC TAYLOR: Good afternoon. My name is Michael Taylor. I'm a 32-year member of this department. I'm honored to be serving as your Alternate NEC at this time and would love to serve two more years.

If you have any more questions, I'll be at the ice cream dispenser.

(Laughter) (Applause)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Legionnaire Steven Thomas.

Oh, Dale. I'm sorry. Legionnaire Dale Haynes.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. I'm too old to stand up. I would appreciate your continued support. I'm currently the Judge Advocate, and I'd like to have the position again for another year.

Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, Dale. Steven Thomas for Commander.

POST COMMANDER THOMAS: My name is Steve Thomas. I'm from Post 178, up in Grove. I've been in the American Legion for 12 years, Department of Oklahoma for going on eight of those. I'm a Paid Up for Life member. I'm also a member of the Sons of the American Legion, and I'm also an American Legion Rider.

In the past, I have held positions as, obviously, Squadron Commander. I was a committeeman at the post in the revitalization of 2019 when we went from 60 members to present where we're at 230. We have completely rebuilt that post from the ground up, and then, obviously, chartered the Squadron in 2020. We survived it through COVID, ended up bringing national awards home for the squadron activities.

I currently sit as the Post Commander for 178. We continue to thrive, continue to rebuild every day. No matter how many things are going well, you don't let off the gas pedal. You keep building. You keep moving forward.

I'm currently, also, your Detachment Commander that falls as a program of the American Legion. Our detachment this year is number one in the nation in membership at 114 percent, out of 55 detachments, versus

where our department currently sits. I feel that we have got to that point by working together. We do not have animosity. Instead of looking down on our brothers and sisters, the only time we look down is when we're trying to lift them up. We do not have the struggles that we see on the other side of the table.

The communication, when we get on e-mail, if it comes down from National or National Vice Commanders, it is disseminated, typically, within three to four hours, not three to four weeks. Communication, we work together on everything. There is no "I" in the Detachment, and that's what we need to bring to the department.

I've heard that I'm not experienced enough. I haven't been a district commander. You're right, I haven't, but I have proven myself in this Legion Family, maybe not on the Legion side, but as a Legionnaire in the Legion Family, we have been successful.

We need to stop looking down on our brothers and sisters and start lifting them up.

I would appreciate your support upon Sunday. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is there any others seeking higher office? Any others seeking higher office?

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We will close that

out, then.

Do we have any sick call, relief, or employment that needs to be given to the Department?

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: If not, Doug, let me tell you, Brother, I am impressed. I know you told me the other day that you're feeling better, but I'm still a little concerned. I don't know if it's because they got the stents in or if it's the drugs they gave you.

(Laughter)

DEC REP HALE: It's just as easy to sit here as it is to sit at home.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: So, don't overdo it. We want to keep you around a while.

Are there any service officer reports?

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: If not, we'll move on.

Old Business. That would technically kind of fall under New Business, so I think that's where I got you.

But if you want to go ahead and speak, I'll let you do that, Brett.

ODVC REP MARTIN: It's been a bad year for the Oklahoma Veterans Commission. You saw a report I put out the other day, because we had some previous commissioners

making unfounded accusations about the current commission. And the funny thing about it is that he does it on Facebook. We have some very high-ranking individuals who support those posts, which is kind of funny. But it is what it is.

We resolved the $22 million overrun, uncovered because I requested an audit, and we found the money. That was terrible. Because of that, we had to correct the construction, the fiscal delays of the new Sallisaw home. But as you saw, we opened it up in January, and as of today, this morning, we have ten wonderful veterans living in Sallisaw, and each one is incredibly happy. Bringing 175 more vets to our great state of Oklahoma, and we're back at a full strength of seven homes.

We transformed the ODVA internal culture when we took over three years ago when the governor wiped the board of the old commission. The morale at ODVA, to say that it was low, is an understatement. There was coercion. There was hate. If it was a ship, they'd have to weld it to the pier because they couldn't get it underway.

Thanks to Dr. Sidney Ellington, one of the commissioners, he has been doing HR stuff and doing best practices, and it is night and day up there. And the best part about this is we've got three Legionnaires who

were in senior positions on the staff, and the director's also a Legionnaire, the two-star Admiral Bynum.

Go to the next slide, please.

We proposed and passed, just recently, thanks to the Senate and the governor, we created a 501(c)(3) called the Oklahoma Veterans Support Foundation.

So you're going to say, "Well, Brett, why do we need a nonprofit foundation?" There are certain things that we just don't have enough money to pay for. If you ask any legislator, any director of any program, there's never enough with this, period, at the end of the day.

What this will allow the Veterans Foundation to do is to solicit donations and have them set and ready to go so that 100 percent of the donations given to the foundation go back to the veterans of our great state. We have set it up in such a manner that nobody on the board of the foundation gets paid, period. It's 100 percent giveback.

We've hired two incredibly successful ODVA directors, Rear Admiral Lower Half Greg Slavonic and Rear Admiral Upper Half James Bynum. They've brought more than strategic vision and operational excellence to ODVA. They brought true crew leadership and experience. Because let's be brutally honest. We've had people in there who've had no experience. And what happens when

someone with absolutely no experience gets into a job? Nothing, because they're trying to learn the job.

We filled eight of the nine commission seats.

Go ahead to the next slide.

There is your current lineup. I am currently serving my second year as the Chairman of the Commission, and my term doesn't run out until July of '27. What's good about this is, thanks to Senate Bill 1384, we are the only veteran service organization on there. The rest are filled at-large positions. Because other Big Four, despite what they may say, they have not played by the rules. We are in good standing. We can go to the secretary of state and get our certificate, and this gives us an opportunity to set this board.

Long story short, Ladies and Gentlemen, it's been a tough three years, but with this commission, this current lineup of ODVA leadership we have, we're making great things happen.

And the next thing is now to get down to Ardmore and try to get that the new home built down there, but with the cuts coming in the federal government, everything's been put on hold at the moment, but we have a meeting Tuesday to talk about putting in a new request to try to amplify it moving forward.

If you go to the next slide, I think that's it.

Are there any questions?

(No response)

ODVC REP MARTIN: All right. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I didn't move up to the mic.

ODVC REP MARTIN: Okay.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Past Department Commander Martin, I have had two requests -- correction -- three requests, two from the House and one from the Senate. There seems to be some issue about losing the representatives in certain areas, particularly one in the Atoka area, one in the Ardmore-Durant area that's coming this direction, and one in the Northeast. I want to say it was up near Salina.

Have you lost one of your guys up there from the ODVA to come visit you? No? It was someone from the Northeast. I don't remember off the top of my head.

But we are looking at, and I proposed, too, that these individuals, and I would also propose it, if you don't mind, to the ODVA, that we as the American Legion can take up a lot of that slack, but we probably need to look at those individuals and why they're not showing up in those particular --

ODVC REP MARTIN: Yeah, I'll take -- that's easy because the Director of Veterans Services who oversees

all the service officers is a Legion member out of my post.

But that's weird for the fact that last year the American Legion created 34 PIV card service officers.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah.

ODVC REP MARTIN: ODVA is currently hiring more service officers as we speak.

But I'll check into it, and I'll bring back an answer to that. That's at good question. Thank you.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Can I?

ODVC REP MARTIN: Yeah.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Post 17 asked for a representative at Mid-Winter, and they had said that they would get with us, and he's never contacted us. So that's something we also need to look into.

ODVC REP MARTIN: Okay. When you say you contact these people, you've got to write down who you contact, and you've got to call 36th Street to get them.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: It was Bynum.

ODVA REP MARTIN: Okay. But, no, you need to call 36th Street. Because how they're doing it now, it all filters through one person. Okay?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Any other questions?

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: If not, we will continue on.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEEMAN MCNEAL: Other reports, sir?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes. I'll take a report.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEEMAN MCNEAL: John McNeal, Post 306. I serve as your National Cemetery Committee. My report doesn't require slides because I'm really good.

(Laughter)

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEEMAN MCNEAL: I'm not saying Brett's not because Brett taught me.

But in more recent committee exposure, we have, myself and Danny Gross out of Post 20, we attended the Washington Conference. The Cemetery Committee's outreach, sometimes, is a little bit different.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Too loud.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEEMAN MCNEAL: Too loud? Okay. I may not even need this microphone.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We're trying.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEEMAN MCNEAL: Are we good?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's still loud.

DEC REP KUNTZE: Start from the beginning again,

John, please.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEEMAN MCNEAL: That's okay.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER MARTIN: John, introduce yourself.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEEMAN MCNEAL: My name is John McNeal, Post 306, in Fletcher. I serve on the National Cemetery Committee.

Is that a good volume?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Go ahead and talk into it, John, while I adjust it.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEEMAN MCNEAL: I attended the Washington Conference in February of 2025. The National Cemetery Committee, being a part of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, did not meet independently. We did receive information while we were there at the conference. That information will include very limited information just to let us know that there are now 156 national cemeteries, of which 65 are considered closed. But when the VA says that a cemetery is closed, it's closed to new interments. VA cemeteries will always offer perpetual care. They will just have no new interments. That's what that "closed" indication means.

In the state of Oklahoma, we have two national

cemeteries, that being either Fort Gibson and down in Elgin, the Fort Sill National Cemetery.

Danny will bring information if I say anything wrong about that from that end, but at Fort Sill National Cemetery, we are undergoing an expansion project. We have put in a new 1,000 niche unit. It will accommodate, obviously can accommodate, 2,000. Because two standard sized niches can be buried there, if they are as a veteran and a spouse or two veterans to be buried there.

We are also putting in -- or have put in the vaults that will accommodate 2,800 more interments, that being in two sections. If you've been there to visit, we've put section four next to two, because it made sense, and six next to four, because that made sense. But if you've been there, you know our even numbers go up the inside, and our odd numbers go up the outside, all the way up to the flag pole.

We currently have 1,276 as of yesterday in the Fort Sill National Cemetery but can accommodate, in the current phase, 45,000. Without a war, a conflict, accelerated attrition, historical data tells us that will take us through about 17 years. At which time, like other national cemeteries, they will search for expansion capability.

But at the present time, pending what we might

receive in an independent committee meeting in Tampa, that would be the latest news that you have coming from your National Cemetery Committee.

Sir, subject to your questions.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Any questions?

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, Legionnaire McNeal. Thank you for everything that you do out there.

NATIONAL CEMETERY COMMITTEEMAN MCNEAL: You're welcome, sir.

Told you I was good.

(Laughter)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Are there any other reports?

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: If not, we will continue on to Old Business.

All right. If you've got an agenda, it says there, "Update the search for Department Headquarters." The status of that is we have looked at Post 13. Post 13 had some encumbrance at the time that we were looking at it. We do believe those encumbrances at the department and the liens and anything else that was there does not look like they are there anymore. It looks like it is clear.

But again, the 5,500 square feet, there was a mention brought up here at this meeting that we could possibly take the building and sell it. Well, that would be left up to the post. Remember, the post owns it as far as we're concerned in this department.

At the time that we talked, Mr. Kuntze was there. The post did not seem like they were interested in that. They really, actually, wanted us to take over the post, and they would be working in and out of there.

I do not feel -- I shouldn't tell you how I feel. I'll leave that up to you about what you want to do with that later on if you want to decide that.

We were looking at a bank in Lexington. It is within the metro area, metroplex area, but it is about a 40 minute drive if you're doing 80 miles per hour. The reason I know that is because I was doing 80 miles per hour.

(Laughter)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Was that why the car wrecked?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No. That was actually leaving the city, unfortunately.

But the building does have a couple of issues. It's an old bank. Like I said, it's 9,000 square feet. It's 4,500 on the bottom, 4,500 on the top. But one of the

things, three years ago when we met at this DEC, one of the things that was brought up that whatever building we get should be self-sustaining, should be bringing in income, and as far as we have found, that's about the only best fit we have.

We can actually turn the 32 hotel rooms that's above it into 15 apartments, turn it over to a real estate agent, and let them manage it. We are working on a five-year plan to do that, because it will cost money. Initially, buying the building, yes, we could get it for 100,000, but you're probably going to look at another half to a million in order to fix everything up to get to that point within a five-year period.

Unless the Department changes the way it does business and we can find ways to increase money, increase membership, and reduce our spending, I'm sorry to tell you, I don't think any of these things are going to be possible. But again, that would be left up to you. Think about it. If there's something you want to bring up in DEC 1, or if you want to bring it up here, please do.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Commander, do we have any reports from our Department Building Committee?

That should be a pet peeve of mine to make sure it's on the minutes.

Jim Rees, 6B Commander. Do we have any reports from our Department Building Committee to tell us the pros and cons of each site that was looked at yet? That was a do-out.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No. Not at this time.

Would it be possible if I sent that information out to you via e-mail? Would you review it?

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Absolutely.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Are you sure?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Yes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Okay. Then I will make that happen.

Our second favorite person in the Department of Oklahoma, Andrew Wright. My last conversation with Jared was a few days ago. This is where we stand: He has passed it over and given the information to an actual trial attorney that does civil litigation like this. They're looking at possibly anywhere between August and November to bring the court case back into the system.

The gentleman does feel that we have a good chance of winning, but he said it's like anything else, it's a court. It's the legal system. At this present time, they do not feel that he has a leg to stand on, but things can happen.

So we are continuing and moving forward with what you requested, that we go after Mr. Wright and try to end this with a no prejudice judgment at the end of it so we can stop all of this and wasting our money on lawyers.

If you haven't heard or seen, if you haven't looked at the finances, when it comes to that, we spend quite a few thousand dollars just defending ourselves against frivolous lawsuits.

So that's where we stand.

Jared, I'm hoping, will be here on Sunday, but right now it's a Friday. He's got things he's got to do. So I'll let you know what's going on with that.

We are looking at the 50/50 Raffle.

Do you want to talk about that, or do you want me to do it?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Do it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Drawing.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Drawing, raffle.

Here's the problem, when we tried this, we did not make very much. Again, I told you in the past, you've got to keep plugging at something to make it work. Same thing. If we do this, we've got to keep plugging at it. But the Department can't do it. That's not our job. We cannot go out and sell at your posts. That is you. We are a bottom-up organization. And I am sorry. I

apologize. I can tell you from the bottom of my heart that I wish I could go out and make it at your posts, but that's not my job.

So here's what I'm going to offer. It's going to be a surprise to Rick, so don't be surprised if you see me get knocked on the ground.

(Laughter)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Talking to individuals -- and it wasn't just one. I put it out to several. Even Rick has kind of brought this up to us -- the adjutant. If we do this again, we need a full-court press from the posts. But you need something in return. If your 50/50 winner is from your post, you need to let them know this. If it's from your post, we will give you ten percent. That's what we're looking at, giving you ten percent at that post of our 50 that we have. So we would wind up with 40 percent. I will not give it to an individual that sold the tickets, or whatever. That should go to the post to help that post out. That's what we do.

Are there any questions on that? Any thoughts? Backlash?

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, Post 17, District 1B. So, if we're doing the guns and there's ten winners, so you're giving --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No. This is not the guns. It's the 50/50 Raffle.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Okay. Sorry. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Okay. Let's make it easy, because I've got a small brain. Let's say it's $1,000 we draw in. We give 500 away. We give ten percent of the 500. That's $50. So we went up to $450 at the Department level, 50 at the post.

PDC MARTIN: You still have to pay the vendor.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes. That is true. And that comes out before we get anything.

Yeah, one of the things we're looking at is trying to determine, before we can do anything, how to determine which post was the one that did it. There would have to be something that they clicked or gave us, or something. Yeah.

But we'll be continuing -- it's not like we dropped the ball on it. We are working. Rick continuously works with the vendors, trying to figure stuff out.

DEC REP DEER: (Unintelligible)

DEC REP KUNTZE: Commander?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes?

DEC REP KUNTZE: Have him identify himself.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah.

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, Post 153, 2B DEC. You're talking about if you put it on your Facebook page, the link to it? Would that be what you're talking about? But I don't think you can put it on Facebook.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No. The issue with that is we -- let's say Ron buys one of the tickets for the 50/50. He goes into the pot electronically. And we might be able to see "Ron." If we can see "Ron," then we can say, "Okay. It may have came from Post 140 -- 240, up in Sallisaw."

PDC MARTIN: If I can, Commander?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

PDC MARTIN: The way it was set up last time, we knew exactly what post that the ticket was sold from because as you bought the tickets online, you click the post that you're coming from. So there's no ambiguity here. It's already set up that way.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: So we would be able to see that, hopefully.

DEC REP DEER: Okay.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Any other questions?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are we going to vote on it?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Well, we've

actually kind of voted on it. We were told to go ahead and make it go forward. I'm just giving you an update of where it's at. We've been given our marching orders.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Are we moving on?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Any other Old Business?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Any other Old Business?

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Jim Rees, 6B Commander. Can we get an update on the 501(c)(3) for the Department? The last we talked about it was DEC 4, and the effort required one last signature. So where are we at now?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I received information.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Rick Redden.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Rick Redden, Department Adjutant. I received the final by-laws that we have to agree to. I will publish them on next day, and we'll talk about them at DEC 1. There's no changes from the most recent, but we just need to get it in the minutes that we approve it.

Secondly, there's one form I'll sign, but I can't do that until after we approve the by-laws.

So the net is that if life goes the way Jared says, the application will go in to the IRS this coming week, and then the IRS take however long they take. Jared tells me what's slowed things down -- and you probably know this. You've heard this before -- was we rewrote -- or the by-laws had to be rewritten to give the DEC greater authority over how the Four Pillars 501(c)(3) is administered.

One last thing is we need to take one final look at the officers of the 501(c)(3). And my communication with you that will go out tonight will list what's currently in the by-laws and in DEC 1. We can change those, but we will confirm them when we confirm the by-laws.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Just a moment, Dale.

To add to that, there's another caveat to this. Currently, we have a number. We can use that number. We cannot have more than $100,000 pass through that number because we're still in a prospect status. And whoever gives you the money cannot have 50 percent more than their annual income. So, if they have $100,000, they can't give you 70. The most they can give you is 50. So you have to look at that.

Now, understand something, if you send money to us -- now, please listen to this, please. If you send

money to us and we put it there, we will not take any of your money. We will turn around, and I will give you -- or whoever the commander is, or whoever, they will write you and send a grant proposal. You will fill out that grant proposal, and then we will turn that money over to you. This is not a money-making scheme for the Department. This is for you to use that 501(c)(3) also.

You're shaking your head.

Dale Haynes, you have the floor.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. I know I'm probably the only one that don't understand, Rick. But just so I do understand, you say you're going to post it, and we're going to vote on it Sunday. Are you saying you're going to post it on the Department website so we can find it? Where are you going to post it?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'm going to forward the e-mail I receive from Jared to the DEC.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: So you're going to send an e-mail to all of the DEC members?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Right now, as a matter of fact.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Okay. Then we'll have it so we can vote on it. We can go home tonight and read it. Thank you, Rick. I just need to know where to find

it at.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Look in your e-mail.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Good news.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Sam McPherson.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: Sam McPherson, Department Treasurer. Just for clarification, we are going to use this to fundraise for the Department.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: It's just that if a post would like to use it, that money will go to the 501(c)(3) charity, and that charity will write them back a grant for a post, but the Department will also be seeking funds for the Department.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes. Yes. Absolutely.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: Just wanted to clarify.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

The floor recognizes Steve Thomas.

POST COMMANDER THOMAS: Just to bring to the attention, I am currently an officer on the Four Pillars of Hope, so this body who approved me three years ago needs to start thinking about a replacement if Sunday

does go that I happen to be elected as your next Department Commander. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

Are there any other questions, saved rounds or alibis?

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Then we will move into New Business.

New Business. We're lucky we've already got the tickets for the summer coming up here. We've got them in our lobby out here. So you need to start thinking about Mid-Winter. What do you want to do? So that we can get the tickets made up and done.

If you're looking at doing gun raffles, you've got a couple of meetings between now and then. So, if you don't, we'll go back to Shooting Sports, and we'll do the same thing we've been doing. If you've got something different you want to bring forward, please do so during one of the DEC meetings between now and Mid-Winter. Do not wait until Mid-Winter because it will be too late to get the tickets. I would suggest it be at either DEC 1 or, more than likely, DEC 2.

Any questions?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mid-Winter or Summer?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: That would be

Mid-Winter. We've already got the tickets for the Summer.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Unintelligible)

DEC REP KUNTZE: Can you go to the mic, please?

DEC REP BLOXOM: My question is, Mid-Winter or Summer? We've already purchased tickets for Mid-Winter.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

DEC REP BLOXOM: We should be dealing with next summer.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: You are correct, John. Thank you very much. I misspoke on that.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We knew what you meant.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Next thing up, we're going to talk about the National Convention hotel stay.

Currently, our finances in the Department is not where it should be. We're looking at $10,000 to house our people coming up, in Tampa Bay. We have five rooms that we have -- or we should be paying for, due to several issues. One of them is labor laws, a couple of other things. If you send someone to do business on behalf of this Department outside of this state, and you don't compensate them in some form or fashion, they could actually come back and sue this Department.

Remember what I've told you in the past, and I will

tell you again, and I will remind, if you are a blue and white, you are a white, or you're a red hat, you are an unpaid employee of this Department. You were voted to do a job, and if you are sent to National, if you're sent to Indianapolis, and we don't compensate you in some way, that is kind of a violation of federal law.

With that being said, we don't have the money to send five people, not really, not technically.

So I am going to defer the rest of this information to Rick Redden.

If you would like to say something?

(Laughter)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Well, he's been working with our Finance Officer.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: The only comment is that we have a proposed budget that is not likely to be approved prior to National Convention. Therefore, the issue for us is do we indeed pay for the rooms for the Incoming Commander, the Outgoing Commander, the Senior Vice, the Adjutant, and the --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: NEC.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: No, the Alternate NEC.

I believe, traditionally, in this Department, their room costs were covered. So that budget for $10,000 was

to cover the rooms for those five people. Those room are about 160 a night, 140-something plus taxes.

So I just want confirmation that we have the authority to spend that money.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Jim Rees.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Jim Rees, Commander, 6B. Of those folks going to National, does National provide a call-in to any of those people that they're already getting paid from the National level?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: And is there anything in our Constitution and By-Laws that says we have to pay for anybody that's a Department officer? We already talked about the employees, obviously, have to have their's covered, but how about for the rest of the officers?

(Crosstalk)

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Is there anything that says we must cover them?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No. By precedence in the past, we -- there's actually nothing that says that has to be budgeted out, but by precedence in the past, we have done that.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Precedence when we had

money, but we don't have money.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Correct.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. Let me first start off by answering Jim's question. The Constitution says these are the people that are designated to be representatives. We do have the right to select alternatives if they do not want to go, but it does not say anything about the payment.

I hate to bring this up in a public forum, but we've got to do it. I've got to take issue with what you just said about there being the federal law. I am not a lawyer. However, my job is to advise you on legal matters. I did look it up on the internet. All I know is what I read on the internet. It says there is no federal law. There is a federal law for federal employees. There is a law for state employees. We're not the federal government. We're not the state government. On the state government, it is good business practice. We usually pay for the employees. It is not a legal requirement unless their expenses brings them down to below minimum wage. This is for employees, such as Mr. Redden, not for members of a fraternal organization.

So, in summary, do what you want to do, but I would take issue with the fact that you've got to run scared of the federal law. I'm not finding any federal law, and

that's my job is to advise you on that.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: He's absolutely right. And remember what I said, they could. That doesn't mean they can. They could. Because we've been in this situation, currently, with one of our individuals in this Department.

The floor recognizes Sam McPherson.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: Sam McPherson, Treasurer. Yes, we did run a deficit this year, and based on our current budget, it doesn't look like we'll be doing much better next year.

However, I don't really think, if you look at the history of how much money we brought in and we spent, I don't think it's necessarily an expense problem. It's an income problem. We need to come up with additional sources of revenue. Hopefully, the 501(c)(3) will solve it for us. However, we've been waiting on that for two years.

Also, as far as -- particularly for National Convention, I would say, even though it is a new fiscal year, at this late in the game, it's kind of hard to say, "Oh, by the way, we can't afford to send you guys." I think, if we need to make a policy like that we need to make a policy for next National Convention. They already expected that they would go this year.

I say we send them, and we bite the bullet, and we figure it out because we have a year to figure out this problem. I think to try and solve it in two or three days is not the best decision.

Thank you, sir.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

The floor recognizes John Bloxom.

DEC REP BLOXOM: John Bloxom, Post 126, DEC District 4. Charlie, would you correct me if I'm wrong? National calls in selected individuals. National gives me two options. I can drive my car for mileage up to $500, or I can take an airline ticket that they purchase. They give me one day's per diem going and one day's per diem coming back. They do not pay for my room.

Why are we any different?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I see nobody else standing up. So, you've heard all the information. You heard where we're standing.

What do you think?

Let's do it this way: I will entertain a motion on the floor for further discussion.

DEC REP BLOXOM: For further discussion, I don't have anything. But I will make a motion that we send our five individuals that all have roles to play there, that we provide them mileage or an airline ticket, roundtrip,

and one day's per diem each way.

Our people shouldn't be treated differently than any other delegate coming to the National Convention. That doesn't stop me from going. If I go, I pay my own way. I pay may own hotel bill. We need more of the me's going.

So my motion is we send our five delegates with mileage and per diem each way or an airline ticket.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Do I have a second?

DEC REP QUINN: Jim Quinn, 2A DEC. I second the motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is there any further discussions?

DEC REP DEER: Well, I was going to make --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Name, please?

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 2B DEC. I was going to make a different motion because --

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: You can't.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: One motion at a time, please.

Floor recognizes Mike Harris.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Mike Harris, District Commander 5A. John, I need a clarification from you. My brain is going back to the federal government. And if we're following these same guidelines, you're

saying $500 for mileage and per diem until they get there?

DEC REP BLOXOM: (Moved head from side to side.)

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Okay. Because, if you're driving, you're going to be spending the night.

DEC REP QUINN: No. You get one day going --

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: No. I said we're going to go -- my brain is going back to the federal government. So hear me out. When you drive, you're limited to a maximum of 350, 400 miles, so you have to spend the night. So you've got another day of per diem. But if you fly, you can fly anywhere in the United States in one day. So that gets them there with one day per diem.

So you need to look at that as which is the lesser of the two, and you have to do a cost comparison, and that's what they're going to get paid.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: One of the things they do at the National level is like they're trying to express, but I'll explain it to you. Even if it's two days' travel, they look at -- if you take an airplane, their per diem that they're basing it off is if you travel by air, not by car. So that's why they limit you to $500 by car versus what you got for an airplane, because sometimes it's cheaper, and you only have one day

of travel.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: So you're saying that $500 is going to include their mileage and whatever their hotel expenses are and their expenses per diem?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: No.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes John Bloxom.

DEC REP BLOXOM: The $500 is the maximum cost that National allows for me to travel to and from the convention. They purchase the ticket. They will not exceed $500 for that ticket.

Mileage: If I choose to drive my personal car, they will pay me mileage, not to exceed $500. In addition to that, they will give me one day's per diem, regardless of how many days it takes me to get there, and one day to come home. That's all they're going to pay. And you file that travel voucher in advance.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Okay.

DEC REP QUINN: Jim Quinn, 2A DEC.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Jim Quinn.

DEC REP QUINN: Jim Quinn, 2A DEC. What the call-in is for is not for the whole convention. It's just for one day that the committees meet prior to the convention. That's all you're getting paid for.

If you want to stay the rest of the time, you can stay. There's a lot of people that get called in and go home.

DEC REP BLOXOM: But they still do not pay for a room.

DEC REP QUINN: They don't pay for a room for nobody. That don't mean you can't use the money they give you for a room.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Correct.

The floor recognizes Karen Cruice.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: I don't know that I can do it, but I want to, but can I move to recess so that we can have a sidebar discussion?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Not at the moment.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Because there's a motion on; right.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: That's right.

The floor recognizes Curtis Deer.

DEC REP DEER: I have one big question: Is this for the present people going to Nashville very shortly, or are we talking about in the future?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: This is coming up on August 22nd.

DEC REP DEER: So they've been planning for it to be one way, and now we're going to switch it up on

them on the last minute? I think that's wrong.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Due to finances, we have to look at that.

DEC REP DEER: It's just wrong.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Floor recognizes Mike Taylor.

PDC TAYLOR: All right. I would like to flashback to the past. Michael Taylor, Past Department Commander, for this purpose. A few years back when we voted on this, and I think the A. NEC at the time said, "I don't need it, but we'll go for it," but the way they designed it was, for those five people, to cover their room. That's the way that this body voted on that.

I'll state this right now: If you don't have the money to pay for my room, I guess I'll put it on my wife's credit card.

(Laughter)

PDC TAYLOR: But at the end of the day, this body has voted and said we'll pay for these five people, those titles, those five titles, for their room at National Convention. That's the way I recall that vote going down.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Dale Haynes.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge

Advocate. I just want to clarify one thing. When you start talking about mileage and you start talking about per diem, you've got a lot of variance there. We need to make sure we clarify. Are we talking the IRS mileage rate and the IRS per diem rate, or what mileage and per diem rate are we talking?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: That will be through the -- National, they have their own rules on that.

The floor recognizes Elmo May.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: As per National, right here, it says, "Per diem reimbursement shall be $100 per day for the number of days shown above," which is one day, 23 August, "in addition, two days' travel per diem at $50 per day, $100 total." That's what the per diem would be.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: What do they say about gas?

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Fifty-one cents per mile up to $500.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: That's right.

The floor recognizes Past Department Commander Brett Martin.

PDC MARTIN: You know, listening to Past Department Commander Taylor talk and some of the other

folks talk about it's short notice for the folks going, I agree. They, in good faith, ran for offices. They, in good faith, are ready to go represent us.

And due to the fact that our budget is a sham, one of the easiest things to do is just take any idea --

(Crosstalk).

PDC MARTIN: Because, if we can't send five people to Florida, there's no way we can get a building. I mean, that's just high in the sky talking.

I'm under the consensus, like with some of the other folks, if we promised the folks, we've got to find the money to pay for them to go.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Bobby Stewart.

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: Bobby Stewart, Department Chaplain. I think what I'm hearing here is just we don't have the money to send these folks. So that we can move this meeting on and eliminate a lot of discussion, I will donate $5,000 to this Department for the Department to discretely disseminate that money for this convention.

(Applause)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, Bobby.

Floor recognizes Rick Redden, Department Adjutant.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Just to clarify, my

issue is not whether or not we have the money. My issue is the authority to spend the money. Failing an approved budget, I don't have the authority to spend it. So all I'm really asking right now is the authority to pay the hotel for those five people, and I estimate that to be about 10,000. So that's the issue at the moment is just the authority to pay for those rooms.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Any further discussion?

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Point of order, Commander.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes?

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Point of order. We are at 15 minutes for discussion. We should be calling for a vote by the Rules of the DEC.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: State your name, please.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Jim Rees, 6B Commander.

DEC REP BLOXOM: Point of order. I withdraw my motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The motion has been withdrawn. There is no further discussion.

Okay. Curtis Deer has the floor.

DEC REP DEER: I make the motion that we give

the Adjutant the authority to take care of this.

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The motion has been withdrawn. We will take a five-minute break. Correction. We'll do a ten-minute break, and then we'll come back in here, and we will continue on.

All rise. With the Colors of our nation in place, HAND, SALUTE; TWO.

(WHEREUPON, a brief recess was held from 16:14 to 16:29, and then the following transpired:)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: With the colors of our nation in place, HAND, SALUTE; TWO.

All right. We left off with the presenting of a motion for per diem and mileage. At this time, I will entertain any other motions dealing with the housing situation going to National.

The floor recognizes Curtis Deer.

DEC REP DEER: I make a motion that we accept to authority -- to allow the authority to the Adjutant to take care of this as needed, as he described as needed.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The motion is, correct me if I'm wrong, that we allow the Adjutant to pay for housing as necessary in accordance with our Constitution and By-Laws for the five individuals going to the National Convention.

DEC REP DEER: That's exactly what I said, word for word.

(Laughter)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Do I have a second?

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Mike Harris, District Commander, District 5A. I second that motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Any further discussion? Is there any further discussion? Is there any further discussion?

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Then allow me. We will not be paying for per diem. We will not be paying for gas. We will only pay for the room.

Does everybody understand that?

This is to clarify if you're in that position.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: For one day?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: For one day.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: No.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: What do you mean by "one day"?

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The room will be paid for the individuals that are there, the five that we have, only the five. Now, understand, let's say NEC -- which, he will not. He will have to stay there. Let's

say the A. NEC decides that he does not want to stay there, and he's done what he wants to do and he leaves. Well, that's the cutoff for that. Okay?

Yes, sir? I think I know where you're going, but go ahead. Thank you.

DEC REP BLOXOM: Go ahead.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: So, we will pay for those five individuals. He will be authorized to do that. That's what we're talking about here.

So, again, is there any discussion?

Shirley May has the floor.

DEPARTMENT VC WEST MAY: Shirley May, Vice West Commander. So I'm going to ask the question that may be floating out there but may not be. When he made the motion to pay for the five, we're talking for the entire conference?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

DEPARTMENT VC WEST MAY: Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: So, at this time, I will call for a vote. All in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: You want a hand

count?

(Crosstalk)

DEC REP BLOXOM: On the safe side, do a hand count.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: From John Bloxom, we will do a hand count. Any time that one of these counts is -- and we are called upon from the floor, we have to do that.

So, Tyler and -- let me see. Who else?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just count the names.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Let's do this real quick. All in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign. Please hold your hand up.

There's four people. That was the same that we had earlier. So the ayes have it.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: They were both the same sign.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah, but they're different. They don't have to be a different sign.

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All right. So that was National Convention hotel.

So, you are now authorized to do that.

I will entertain, first off, a motion to discuss a Department vehicle.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: We need an update of what's going on.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No. We can't do that until we get the vote. That's what I'm talking about. We need to discuss a Department vehicle.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: We're supposed to have a first and a second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes. And then you go into discussion. So, I need a first and a second if you want to discuss it.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Elmo May, District 7 Commander. I make a motion that we discuss a vehicle.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Do I have a second?

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, 1B. I second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Any discussion?

All right. This is what happened. I was leaving Department Headquarters. We were going home. I was in the middle lane on I-35. At which point and time, at around 12th Street, just going outside of Moore, a semi was coming onto the ramp. I was located in the middle lane. I was doing about 50, 54 miles per hour, somewhere in that speed range. The three cars was not letting the

semi on.

There is a thing that truckers do to get people to let them through. They do a wheel jerk. It's like this (indicated). Well, the three cars saw him do that. They panicked and decided that they wanted to occupy my lane while I was driving. The two front cars -- well, one of them actually passed the semi and went on. The one car that was behind him swerved over into my lane. I went to my brakes. The car that was behind him clipped us on the rear end, which caused the car to fishtail.

Once it fishtailed, the van that was coming up in the high speed lane got there at just about the same time, and I collided side to side and sideswiped him, basically.

When we called the police, the highway patrol came. They took us to OnCue, right around that corner right there. He had us all pull into the same position we were at when we were on the road. He did his investigation. He went through there. And I took photos. And that's where we were at.

The car was totaled. I did not get at ticket. I don't believe the other two individuals that were involved in the accident got a ticket because the people that caused the accident went on down the highway.

So that's where we're sitting. We have a totaled

car. We've got --

How much?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Thirteen five.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: -- $13,500 for the car.

So we have a couple of options. We can go on and try to find another car. We can request a donation for another car, or one of you guys can cough up a vehicle. That's a joke.

(Laughter)

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: I've got a '98 Buick.

(Laughter)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes John Bloxom.

DEC REP BLOXOM: Just a question, sir.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes, sir.

DEC REP BLOXOM: Is this thirteen five in addition to what we received for the van?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yes, it is.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No. The thirteen five that he's talking about, that came for that car. Now --

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: Just for

the car. He's talking about the van.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The other vehicle.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: The $11,437.72.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Sam McPherson.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: Sam McPherson, Treasurer. We did have proceeds from the van. The check was for $11,437.72.

(Crosstalk).

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Adjutant Rick Redden.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: John said under his breath, "Then we must have $24,000 for cars." Well, no. We took in 24,000. It went into our general accounting, and some of it's gone. In fact, most of the 11,000 is gone for other purposes because we chose not to replace the car.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Not to replace the car. Right.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: So we had to write the car off; right? It don't exist anymore. Zero value. So the cash went into the bank account. We wrote off the car. We got the cash we got.

We can choose to spend our cash, but there's no car fund. I don't want you to think there is.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Anyone else? Any further discussion?

The floor recognizes Dale Haynes.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. If there's a motion on the floor, would you mind repeating it?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: There is no motion, only discussion.

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Just for the discussion. There is no motion to buy a car, nothing like that. We're just talking about what we plan or what we want to think about doing.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Well, at that point, then, I'll make another comment. We do not have a budget right now because the budget that was proposed is $102,000 in the hole. In my opinion, that is not acceptable.

I do not think we need to make any decisions at this point until we do get a budget, and in order to get rid of $102,000. I do not think that we can afford to have a budget showing that we're going to lose $102,000 next year. We need to be looking at cutting expenses, which

is the same reason we had that talk about the National Convention.

I think, until we can get the budget resolved, until we go through the expenses we're going to cut, as Rick loves to hear me say, we can't spend money if we don't have it. So I don't see any reason to make any decisions until we can get our budget resolved.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Rick Redden, Adjutant.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'm trying to get a sense of where we're going as a body. I'm not asking for authority to do anything in particular, but we probably --

Is Steve still in the room?

This decision affects him, mostly, in terms of what he can expect in his year as the commander, or whoever we elect on Sunday. I've got to be careful here. I don't have a favorite.

So, is this Department, given our financials, is it our sense to provide a car to our commander, or not? We've been doing this for how long? How long have we provided a car to our commander? Does somebody know?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Forever.

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: What you're saying

is, because of our current state of affairs, we're not even going to attempt to do that? What are you saying?

Give me a sense of direction, here. Obviously, we can't spend money we don't have, but I need to know where to start down the road, here. If I don't need to replace a car, that gives me some flexibility. That's all.

So I'm looking for direction, not looking for a decision.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes --

DEC REP BLOXOM: John Bloxom, Post 126. We have always had a car for our commander. However, most commanders choose not to use it, so it sits parked either at their home or at the post or Department Headquarters. We use our personal cars, most of us have, but we've always had that car. There's never been a year that we didn't have one.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Mike Harris.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Mike Harris, District Commander, 5A. Somebody tell me how we got our last commander's car, affectionately deemed "the clown car." Because I know that's gone through at least three commanders. I need to know because I have a comment I need to make. How did we get it?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I would say we went through four commanders.

(Crosstalk).

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Jim Quinn.

DEC REP QUINN: Jim Quinn, DEC 2A.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Jim, use the mic next to you, Boss.

DEC REP QUINN: Well, this is coming from the horse's mouth. When I was Vice Commander East, Commander O'Leary tasked me to go to Mark Allen Chevrolet and get a damn car, so that's what I did.

We got it from the dealership at the dealership's cost, and the day I picked it up, Carl Kuykendall met me at the dealership with a check for $31,000, and we gave it to the man, and he gave us the car.

Isn't that right, Charlie?

NEC O'LEARY: Yes, sir.

DEC REP QUINN: So does that answer your question?

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: That answers my question. But with all the car dealerships in this metroplex area, you cannot tell there's not one dealership out there, given the proper justification, that they would not donate a car to the American Legion,

Department of Oklahoma.

DEC REP QUINN: Well, I think we rode that horse for a while, and it didn't go anywhere.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Brett Martin.

PDC MARTIN: Past Department Commander Martin. Last year, we got $80,000 donated to us based on Four Pillars 501(c)(3).

There is so much money out in this state to be had, it's not funny. It just takes people to go do it, to go cultivate it.

Now, somebody told me the other day, "Well, $80,000 isn't much." Are you kidding me? If we had $80,000 in our budget right now, we'd be done with this meeting today.

That is a great idea. District Commander Harris is spot on. The money's out there. We've got to get the 501(c)(3) back in place because we're leaving tens of thousands of dollars on the table, period.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Don Kuntze.

DEC REP KUNTZE: In the interim, while we don't have a car, can we consider just paying mileage for the incoming commander until we find that great deal that's going to give us a car at minimum cost or at no cost?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Can I answer that, Don, real quick?

DEC REP KUNTZE: Sure.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: On that, using mileage, I think you're going to run into a problem. That would make -- well, actually, that would have to be an expense report that would be given every time, and then that would be left up to the office to determine that mileage and what percentage. We've already said that it was 51 cents a mile.

Now, understand something, 51 -- now, think about it, 51 cents a mile. So, if you travel six miles, you've already got three dollars. Okay? Now, if you let that gentleman or lady use a gas card, you're going to save a little bit of money.

But, again, it depends on a couple of factors; right? If you've got a V8 6-liter diesel engine, yeah, you're probably not going to save that much. But if you've got a Scion with a 4-cylinder engine that sounds like a rice burner, yeah, you might save something. So there's things that have to be looked at.

If I was asked to give my opinion, it would be simply this: We let the individual use their vehicle. We give them a gas card. We pay for automotive insurance. And I'm not talking car insurance, I'm

talking automotive insurance. If the transmission falls out of the car, it has a breakdown, the rear end, we would be paying that insurance over the year, and they would be compensated to get their car back up and running. That is not a very expensive insurance. It's going to be paid by the year.

But that's the things we need to look at. I'm not suggesting that's what needs to be done, but that the things you have to look at. You have to take everything into account that you can possibly think of.

The floor recognizes Jack Sikes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Commander, I understand you have a motion on the floor to discuss this.

At what point are you going to close this discussion so that we can make other motions?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: When nobody else stands up, or 15 minutes. Have we hit that time limit?

(Crosstalk)

DEC REP QUINN: I move that discussion cease.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Then I'll take the motion to cease discussion and move on to the next phase, if we need to.

DEC REP QUINN: Jim Quinn, 2A. I move that discussion cease.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Do I have a second? Actually, I don't need a second on that.

Thank you, Jim.

So the discussion is ceased at this time. We will accept any other motions dealing with the vehicle. If there's none to be presented, then we'll move on to the next order of business.

Floor recognizes Jack Sikes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: 3B Commander.

Folks, I make a motion that we allow the Adjutant to pursue the possibilities of a cheaper vehicle or an avenue to acquire a vehicle, and then him come back with us and let us know what he has found. That's my motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is there a second? Is there a second?

Floor recognizes Curtis Deer.

DEC REP DEER: I second it with one exception, if you would allow.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: You can't do that. You either second it, as the motion's made, or you ask to have it --

(Crosstalk).

DEC REP DEER: I withdraw the second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Do I have a second?

DEC REP KUNTZE: I'll make that second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The second was made by Don Kuntze.

Is there any discussion?

PDC MARTIN: Yes. Past Department Commander Martin. In the meanwhile, can we send a solicitation letter out to the 188 dealers across the great state of Oklahoma?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes. And I will ask that a caveat be added to that.

(Laughter)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I would ask that a caveat be added to that. Remember what he said. We have a 501(c)(3). We have a current active number. As long as the car doesn't cost us $100,000, we can write a donation receipt to that car dealership that they can use on their taxes.

DEC REP KUNTZE: Along those lines, can we consider a lease, also?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Don Kuntze. He said he'd like to recognize looking at a lease.

That would be one of the options, Don, that we could look at. Thank you.

Floor recognizes John Bloxom.

DEC REP BLOXOM: John Bloxom, Post 126. Our

Adjutant is full-time busy. Now we're going to give him another job and take him away from running this Department. He runs the Department.

Come on, guys. Be serious.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You going to do it, John?

DEC REP BLOXOM: No, I'm not.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Asked and answered.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: How about Brett Martin?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Has he raised his hand? I didn't see that.

The floor recognizes Brett Martin.

PDC MARTIN: No. She said how about me.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Oh.

PDC MARTIN: It's a simple solicitation letter. The $80,000 that I got for the Department last year, that was --

(Crosstalk)

THE STENOGRAPHER: I can't hear him.

PDC MARTIN: -- an insurance company.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Sam McPherson.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: I'll just do it from here. They need to amend the motion because

the motion was for the Adjutant. So, if they amend the motion, then we can go ahead and vote on that.

(Crosstalk)

DEC REP KUNTZE: Point of order. We don't have any record of what Brett Martin said. It wasn't audible.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Can you repeat that, Commander Martin?

PDC MARTIN: Brett Martin, Past Department Commander. I volunteer to go be this point of contact for the Department of Oklahoma to solicit a new car from the dealerships across the great state of Oklahoma.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Floor recognizes Eric Grubbs.

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: Eric Grubbs, 5B District Commander. Regarding the motion, I make an amendment to that motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: You can't do that. The original person has to do that.

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: For the discussion, then, I would recommend that we think of -- the Commander appoint somebody to pursue the solicitation of instead of donating -- or, instead of telling the --

(Crosstalk).

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: -- Adjutant to do it, who doesn't have the time to do the --

(Crosstalk)

PDC MARTIN: I amend my motion. This is Past Department Commander. I make a motion that the Department Adjutant designates me as the point of contact --

(Crosstalk)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Point of order. The motion's --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Stop. Stop. Stop. Let's slow down.

The original motion was made by Jack Sikes. Jack Sikes is the only one that can amend his motion. No one else can amend his motion. It is his motion.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Commander?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Please.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Jack Sikes. I would like to amend that and have our Adjutant appoint --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Commander.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Commander appoint.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Okay. Commander, you appoint a point of contact to find a vehicle.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We have an amendment to the motion to allow me to appoint someone to do a car search.

The floor recognizes Eric Grubbs.

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: Eric Grubbs, 5B Commander. Do you need a second on the amendment?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: I second the amendment.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you.

The amendment has been seconded. Is there any further discussion?

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All right. Currently, the motion is to have me appoint a member from our Legion, Past Department Commander Brett Martin, to facilitate looking for us a new car.

Is there any further discussion? Any further discussion? Any further discussion?

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Then I will call for a vote. All in favor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

(Whereupon, Wireless Emergency Alerts sounded on everyone's device. Thereafter, the following transpired:)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I apologize because

we got interrupted that way. I'm going to do this again.

All in favor of me appointing someone to look for a car, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The motion is carried.

Commander Martin, can you please put out a solicitation letter requesting a vehicle for us, please?

PDC MARTIN: I will, and I'll have the draft at DEC 1 for you to look at.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you. I appreciate that.

All right. I have been asked to allow this body to come forward for discussion of duties and responsibilities of officers. I do not think at that particular time we have a --

(WEAs continued)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: -- movement for a motion.

Is there any discussion? Anyone want to bring up the duties and responsibilities of the officers of the Department of Oklahoma?

The floor recognizes Brett Martin.

PDC MARTIN: I would like to make a motion to have a discussion about the duties and responsibilities of officers.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Do I have a second?

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Mike Harris, District 5A Commander. I second that motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is there any discussion?

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Yes. I want to know when this body allowed somebody that is elected to represent this Department in Washington, D.C., the authority to meddle in the business of this Department.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Can you clarify that? Because, if you're an elected official of this Department, you kind of have a carte blanche to do certain things --

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Okay.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: -- in accordance with your --

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: I have to be careful because --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: -- with your job description. So, be more specific, please.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: I cannot name names

or this is going to go into an executive discussion.

When did this body elect the NEC to meddle in the business of this Department?

My understanding, when the NEC is elected, they represent this Department. They represent. They don't make Department decisions. They don't travel across the state, trying to influence elections and trying to influence people, and then make promises that they know they can't keep. They represent this Department in Washington, D.C., at the National level.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: So, your statement is that he's doing more than what he should. Is that what you're trying to say?

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Exactly.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Okay.

The floor recognizes Brett Martin.

PDC MARTIN: Directly out of National's Constitution and By-Laws, the NEC's authority is limited to National Legion level, where it holds administrative responsibility, and this includes drafting the annual budget, approving contracts, and authorization of National Legion expenditures. NEC members serve as delegates with full voting rights during the Legion's Fall and Spring meetings in Indianapolis as well as at National Convention. The NEC does not have any

jurisdiction or oversight over the Department chain of command.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. Without going into the Constitution, I'm just going to shoot from the top of my head, here. The NEC is an elected position. He does have a role on the National Executive Committee. He does fill that role, but he does give up his membership in the Oklahoma American Legion whenever he gets elected to the NEC.

As a member of this American Legion, I think we all have the right to meddle in our business.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Any further --

I'm sorry, Commander, you have already spoke once. Someone can yield their time to you.

MR. LARSON: Lance Larson, Post 129. The NEC can only carry what the DEC gives to him to the National level. The DEC selects appointment to the National committees, and then --

Don't shake your head, Charlie.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: Just direct your comments to the Chair.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah.

MR. LARSON: Oh. I'm sorry.

The DEC selects who's going to serve National committees, and then it's taken to National. I've read

all this stuff. It's took a lot of studying.

We have to get control for this Department to run right again.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Anyone else? Anyone else?

Floor recognizes Don Kuntze.

DEC REP KUNTZE: I yield my time back to Brett Martin.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Commander Martin?

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Are we not getting a little bit beyond what should be an executive session?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Not yet. We're getting close, though. I will control that when it gets to that point.

PDC MARTIN: I make a recommendation we go into executive conference, because what I'm going to say next does not need to be put out for general consumption.

DEC REP QUINN: Jim Quinn, 2A DEC. I move we go into executive session.

(Crosstalk)

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 2B DEC. I second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Well, it's already been seconded.

DEC REP DEER: I thought he made the motion.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: It was

first twice, and then it was seconded.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah.

I have a motion on the floor -- actually, correction on that.

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Well, hang on, John. There's an issue right now. Right now, I have two motions, actually.

DEC REP BLOXOM: Take a break and think about it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: You can't whenever there's a motion on the floor.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yes, you can.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: You can motion to recess to talk about it.

DISTRICT COMMANDER RITTER: And come back.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes, you can take a break.

We will take ten minutes. Form your discussion. We'll come back and finish this up.

PDC MARTIN: In executive session?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Well, right now, we're taking a break to go back into -- because you've made the motion for executive session.

All rise. With the Colors of our nation in

place, HAND, SALUTE; TWO.

(WHEREUPON, a brief recess was held from 17:03 to 17:19. Thereafter, the following transpired:)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: With the Colors of our nation in place, HAND, SALUTE; TWO. Be seated.

First off, I wanted to thank you for all of your advice. I want to thank you for all the things that you have said to me, and this is what is supposed to happen. Not one person knows everything. If you think you know everything, you're in the wrong organization.

At this time, I am going to table -- I'm going to request for a tabling of the first motion, because right now we have two motions on the floor. We need to table the first motion, go into the second motion in executive session. Once we go into executive session, then we will determine what needs to happen at that point.

So I need to motion to table the first motion.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Mike Harris, District 5A Commander. I make a motion that we table my motion until we go -- and for discussions after executive session.

To follow that, I make a motion that we go into executive session.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: It's already been done.

Do I have a second to table the first motion?

DEC REP DAY: Jack Day, 8B. I second the motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, Jack.

The motion's been made to go into executive session. A second has been done.

All in favor of going into executive session, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The ayes have it. We will go into executive session.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

Those that are not members of the DEC, Past Department Commanders, please escort them out.

(WHEREUPON, the DEC held executive session from approximately 17:21 to 18:26 and then took a brief recess from approximately 18:26 to 18:34. Thereafter, the following transpired:)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: With the Colors of our nation in place, HAND, SALUTE; TWO.

All right. Currently, we have two individuals that wish to speak to you.

Elmo May, please step forward.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Okay. Earlier we went ahead and decided to go ahead and let Brett go ahead and find us a vehicle.

What are we going to do in the interim for the Commander? Are we going to have him drive his own vehicle with no expense to him? Is he going to get the card? What about the insurance? What are we going to do in the interim?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Make some sort of a motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah.

You asked me a question I can't answer. I mean, I can answer your question, but you ain't going to like it.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: I make a motion that we come up with whatever we're going to do for the next commander in the interim until we get him a vehicle. It could take three months. It could take six months. We don't know.

So I'm going to make the motion that we -- I don't know how we want to phrase that -- for the Commander to be reimbursed for his vehicle.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Now define reimbursement.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Fuel, mileage.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: You can't do both. One or the other.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: You don't have to reimburse him for fuel if the Department gives him a gas card.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Okay. So I'm going to say credit card.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Credit card?

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Gas card.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Can you restate that one more time, what your motion is?

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: The motion is to reimburse whoever the next commander is for fuel during the interim of finding a vehicle, because I can only do one.

DEC REP DEER: I second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I have a second. Is there any discussion?

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 153, second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is there any discussion?

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Before we vote on this, how about Finance Officer give us some feedback if we have the dollars to do this?

DEC REP QUINN: We already know that.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Jim Quinn.

DEC REP QUINN: Jim Quinn, District 2A. I propose the solution to this problem is Tango Sierra, tough, and you put in the last word.

We don't have any money.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: John Bloxom.

DEC REP BLOXOM: It can't just cover gasoline, though. The first time I took the Legion car out, I had three tires cut, not from vandalism, just from road hazard. Well, if you just have a gas card, tires are expensive nowadays, very.

So what happens when he needs to fix a broken water hose? What happens when you break a water hose? Those things have to be covered by the card you give him. Why not have -- he files a weekly expense report with his receipts for those things, and we reimburse him for legitimate purposes?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Steve Thomas.

POST COMMANDER THOMAS: So, for those of you that don't know, my private sector position is I am an insurance agent. I just want y'all to be aware that if I am on business for the Department of the American Legion and I get in an accident with POV insurance, you all are going to be sued by whoever the other driver is. So keep that in mind, because it's not against me, but if they

can prove that I was on American Legion business, Department of Oklahoma is going to be sued, not me. Just so you all are aware, if you don't know the insurance law, and I can provide you with documents of that if you question it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I thought I saw another hand.

Curtis Deer.

DEC REP DEER: This is why it needs to not be just gas, it needs to be maintain and coverage on what he's doing, because we don't need the liability.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Anyone else?

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Are we still in discussion?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes, we're still in discussion.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, District 1B. I'm looking at the expense report, and there is money already for gas. So, whether you're driving the car that we should have, Department, or whether we're doing the other, there's already money budgeted for gas.

And then, what about insurance? We've dropped the car insurance, I'm assuming, since we don't have a car. So we're saving that money that could go to it.

So those things should already be in the budget. I mean, I would have thought if we have a company car that the American Legion was paying for, we were insuring it and we were paying for the gas for it. So some money should already be figured into it.

DEC REP BLOXOM: Steve will tell you the same thing. My personal insurance will not pay for a wreck in the company car. It will not pay for a wreck in my truck if I am doing Legion business. It plainly states it's an exclusion. So we've got to cover insurance.

(Crosstalk)

DEC REP CONN: Richard Conn, District 1A DEC. Where I work at, they pay me a monthly wage to use my personal truck for company business once a month. When having to do this, I have to carry $1 million liability insurance as well, and that way our company is protected.

To me, I don't think it's that bad of a price on my insurance that I'm carrying this $1 million liability. But I get to drive my own truck, and it's helpful and, really, kind of economical on both sides.

That's my say.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Thank you, Ron.

Jack Day.

DEC REP DAY: I know this is going to be unpopular, but I'm going to amend the motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Jack?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: You can't.

DEC REP DAY: Oh, I'm sorry. Jack Day, 8 Bravo. I'm going to amend the original motion, because --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You can't.

DEC REP DAY: -- you can. Within Robert's Rules, you can amend it.

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: You can suggest an amendment.

DEC REP DAY: I can show you. If it's germane, meaning it's within the same topic.

So, to include liability insurance that you just talked about, and then also any expenses like repairs that need to be made, have a receipt. So we're talking about amending the motion to include, off of Elmo's original motion of paying mileage --

Is that right?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Gas.

DEC REP DAY: -- or, gas. I'm sorry. Include a liability insurance policy and any expenses incurred because of maintenance, like tires, and repairs, and things of that nature, by receipt.

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Since we're still in discussion -- this is Jim Rees, 6B District Commander.

Before we obligate the Department to a cost we don't know what it is yet, how about we do some research and find out what that bill is before we add to it and vote and agree to it?

Because I'm kind of leery of writing an open check and saying, "Here you go." Whoever it is, someone may be driving a Lexus, or someone may be driving a hooptie. A Lexus is going to cost us a lot more money than a hoopti is going to cost us.

DEC REP DEER: Well, the problem is you have that issue right now with liability, right now.

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Tyler Rector.

DEPARTMENT INTERIM SERGEANT-AT-ARMS RECTOR: I just wanted to say that a motion was made and then discussion happened. A second for that amended motion needs to be made before further discussion.

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Tyler, hang on. Understand something here.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: It wasn't addressing the -- oh.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I know everybody wants to speak, and again, I thank you for that. I thank you for your involvement in this, but as a non-voting

member and not a member of this, you cannot make a statement. I should have cut you off.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: But if the Chair calls on him, it doesn't matter if he doesn't --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: If the Chair calls on him, which I did.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: -- which you did.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Which, I did. So that's what happened.

DEC REP DEER: (Indiscernible) needs to approve the change -- the recommended change and change the motion.

THE STENOGRAPHER: I can't hear you.

DEC REP DAY: Anybody can second it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes, anyone can second it.

DEC REP DEER: But we need to make the change.

DEC REP KUNTZE: Say that again, please, for the stenographer.

DEC REP DEER: Jack Day, 8 Bravo. Anybody can second the amendment.

I propose an amendment to the main motion. We need a second to go into discussion.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I second.

DEC REP DEER: And then, if the amendment fails, then we go back into the main motion.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Remember, you must have been a voting member.

Do I have a second?

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, 1B. I second.

DEC REP DAY: And just for clarity, now we're in discussion of the amended motion?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Correct.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Hang on a second here. Let me clear something up. What we're looking at is gas, insurance, and maintenance. There is, like -- I'm going to screw this up, I know -- Endeavor or Endurance that takes care of cars and things like that. I've looked into this for my own personal vehicle. It's not that expensive. It does cover the maintenance. The gas has already been budgeted, so that system's already in there.

Now, the insurance will be different because we took it out. And he is right, as he is driving, we have to have -- I think it's $1 million, like he said, liability insurance for that.

And I agree, we have to investigate, and it needs to

be brought back here before we accept anything.

DEC REP DEER: The liability bond? They're not that expensive.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Well, that's not the point. The point is it has to be looked at.

Now, here's the thing, here's what you've got to think about, because this was brought up and it's supposed to be an interim, Jim Rees is right, I do not like the idea of handing someone a blank check. I firmly believe that an expense report should be given, and it should be reviewed by both the Adjutant and the Finance Officer. One person should not be in charge of that.

Now, what you have to ask yourself is do you want to add another task to your Adjutant and your Finance Officer?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All right. So now we're all on the same page; right? We understand.

So is there any further discussion? Is everybody good with the motions? Do they understand what's going on?

DEC REP BLOXOM: Call the motion.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: Call the question.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Call the question.

All right.

All in favor of giving gas, insurance both for the vehicle and for the driver, all in favor of those, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed --

DEC REP DEER: And maintenance.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Did I miss something?

DEC REP DEER: Maintenance.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Well, no, that's the automotive -- yeah.

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER MCPHERSON: That's that other insurance.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah, I got some strange looks when I said that, so I thought I misquoted.

All opposed, same sign.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Aye.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Present.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 3: Make it three.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Make it three? All right.

Motion's been approved.

Yes, Chris Sherbourne?

ADJUTANT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SHERBOURNE:

Mr. Commander, as your Adjutant Sergeant-at-Arms, I want to make a point if everybody is okay with that.

First of all, this meeting is open to everybody. Tyler's a Legionnaire. There was this little problem with what he said. This meeting's open to the general public. You do not have to be a member of the American Legion to come into an open meeting.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: To vote, though --

ADJUTANT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SHERBOURNE: But if you shut that down, that is a violation of an open meeting --

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yeah, that's why I called on him. He can speak, but to vote, you've got to be a member of the DEC.

Tina Kilmer, did you have something you wanted to put out?

DEC REP/EDITOR OF 1889 KILMER: Hi. Tina Kilmer, 8A DEC and also the editor of the 1889. I'm looking for just a little bit of interaction. I know everybody's tired, and they want to leave.

How many of you guys have been getting the 1889?

(Hands raised)

DEC REP/EDITOR OF 1889 KILMER: Okay. How many of you guys have been submitting things to the 1889?

(Hands raised)

DEC REP/EDITOR OF 1889 KILMER: That has to change. I'm not beating the dead horse and saying communication, but I can't publish stuff if I don't have stuff sent to the 1889 e-mail address. I send it to Rick. He works his magic and makes it go out to everybody. So that's what needs to be done.

I received three obituaries. That's either great or crappy communication -- great for less deaths or crappy communication.

We need you guys to send this stuff. The e-mail address is TALOK1889@gmail. If you need it again, come find me. It's an easy e-mail address.

Send me what you guys have done -- Flag Day, dedications, your monthly meetings if you've got a guest speaker. Send me something so I can put it in there because other Legions take ideas off of that and run with it and could possibly get new membership.

Thank you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Tina, can you give that e-mail address one more time, please?

DEC REP/EDITOR OF 1889 KILMER: TALOK1889@gmail.com. Yes, it is on the Department website in, like, one of the little drop downs for newsletters or something.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.
DEC REP/EDITOR OF 1889 KILMER: Yes, sir?
DEC REP CONN: May I ask her a question?
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.
DEC REP CONN: We have --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: State your name.
DEC REP CONN: Oh, sorry.
Ms. Tina, we have --
MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: State your name.
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Your name, not her name.
(Laughter)
DEC REP CONN: Richard Conn, 1A DEC. Ms. Tina, we now have our website up and going at Post 240.
DEC REP/EDITOR OF 1889 KILMER: Great.
DEC REP CONN: Is there a way that we can get 1889 on our website, a link or something to it?
DEC REP/EDITOR OF 1889 KILMER: I send it to Rick. Rick sends it to the Legion. That's above my pay grade. I don't know the answer to that question. I send it to him as a Word document. He makes all the magic and makes it go out to everybody.
DEC REP CONN: Okay.
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Mike Kerr.
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEEMAN KERR:

Mike Kerr, Post 64, Media and Communications. Traditionally, the 1889 is published on the Legion Department of Oklahoma website. What you can do is link to that particular page, not a problem. And the links can go back and forth.

So, if there's posts who want their post on the Department website, depending on file size, that could happen, but you can also link directly to that page that's posted on the Department webpage. And if you need help, call me, and I'll be happy to come to your post and do it for you.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is there anything else that we need to bring up?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Then we will move into the resolution phase. I will turn the mic over to Rick Redden, Adjutant, for the reading of the resolutions.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I am reluctant to sit here and read all of this. Is this absolutely a requirement to read them?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Which one are we looking at?

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Well, I've got

number one in my hand.

"Webster-Schrack Post 227, The American Legion, Department of Oklahoma

"Meeting: January 6, 2025.

"Resolution One

"Title: Modification of Oklahoma Summer Convention Voting Schedule

"WHEREAS, the Oklahoma American Legion Summer Convention traditionally convenes from Thursday through Sunday in July; and,

"WHEREAS, voting for vacant state officer positions is currently conducted on Sunday; and,

"WHEREAS, many members may have prior commitments, including religious observations, work obligations, or family responsibilities, which prevent them from being present for Sunday voting; and,

"WHEREAS, these scheduling conflicts may limit the ability of some members to exercise their voting rights in person on behalf of their posts; now, therefore, be it:

"RESOLVED by Post 227, the American Legion, Department of Oklahoma, in regular meeting assembled in Barnsdall, Oklahoma, on February 6, 2025, that Post 227 urges the Department of Oklahoma to modify the Oklahoma Summer Convention schedule; and, be it further:

"RESOLVED that voting for vacant officer positions be conducted late in the Saturday afternoon session to ensure that all members, regardless of personal commitments, have the opportunity to participate in the election process; and, be it, finally:

"RESOLVED that this change will enhance democratic participation and allow all eligible voting members to fully engage in both Legion affairs and personal obligations without conflict.

"This is to certify the above resolution was approved by Post 227 for recommendation to District 1, Department of Oklahoma.

"Approved

"Post 227 Commander Claud Rosendale

"Post 227 Adjutant William Lynch."

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: At this time, I will take a motion to approve the resolution to go before general membership.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Point of order, Commander.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Go ahead.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Why are we doing this for the third time when it takes the membership's vote to approve it or not?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Incorrect.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: The Resolution Committee already said --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Incorrect.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: -- "Send it to membership."

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Incorrect.

DISTRICT COMMANDER SIKES: Show me.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We approve what goes to membership, this body. We approve that. We have to determine if what's going there is going to be required. Because the Resolution is only there to enforce and make sure that the resolution is done correctly.

Yes?

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: This is Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. Since this is not before the convention, you've already sent this out to the posts, if you decide that you don't want to do this now, you're going to have an uprising on your hands, and you're going to have a bunch of members saying, "What happened to the resolution that was sent out?" We should have done this at the last DEC.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Karen Cruice.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: I just have a motion.

DEC REP DEER: I've got a question about this.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Well, hang on. Technically, we should not be discussing this until a motion is made.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Karen Cruice, 1B District Commander. I motion that we approve this for the floor to decide.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Need a second.

DISTRICT COMMANDER MAY: Elmo may, District 7 Commander. I second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Now we're open for discussion.

John Bloxom.

DISTRICT DEC REP BLOXOM: John Bloxom, Post 126. This should not require the membership's approval. This is an administrative decision for this body to make for future conventions.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Agreed.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: Now, if we're going to take it to the floor, it's up to the Resolution's Chairman to present that to the floor during Sunday's -- no -- Saturday's session.

From the committee that reviewed it, or committees that reviewed if there's multiple, we're supposed to give him the recommendation.

Our recommendation from Constitution and By-Laws is to go back to this body for an administrative decision as to how we're going to do a convention in the future.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Correct.

The floor recognizes Curtis Deer.

DEC REP DEER: In principle, I have no issues with this, but I do have a question. It says that they signed this to go to District 1. Where is District 1 signatures and approvals?

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: I have those.

DEC REP DEER: Okay. Well, they should be with this.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: I have those.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We have the supporting documents.

DEC REP DEER: Okay. It just wasn't here, and that's why I was asking.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Charlie O'Leary.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: Charlie O'Leary, Resolutions Committee. This resolution meets all the requirements of a resolution. It's grammatically correct. The format is correct. It pertains to a subject that was brought up by a Legionnaire through a post through the district, and it should be, as long as it meets those criteria, then it

should be -- it was sent out 60 days before the convention. It should be brought up at the floor of the convention and discussed.

The Constitution and By-Laws Committee Chair brought up a valid point. Tomorrow morning or tomorrow afternoon, whenever this is scheduled, would be the appropriate time to bring up objections, let both sides be heard. We have the author, the co-author here, Andrew Fisher from Post 17, and pros and cons can be stated at that time in a simple up or down vote. That's what the process is supposed to be.

It meets the criteria of a valid resolution. It was sent out on time. It should be -- let the blue caps say yes or no.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Steve Thomas.

POST COMMANDER THOMAS: Steve Thomas, Post 178. So our current Constitution and By-Laws actually does not designate that we currently do it on Sunday. It's at the DEC's discretion. If you guys want to do it on Tuesday morning, you can do it on Tuesday morning. It's whenever the DEC approves Rick's suggestion for convention.

So there is absolutely no need for this resolution, whatsoever.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: Rules of the DEC.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Mike Harris, District Commander, 5A. Okay. First of all, did I hear that Post 17 wrote this?

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: No.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Charlie just said something about the author and the co-author or something were from Post 17.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: 227.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: No. This says 227. Charlie said -- stood right there in that microphone and said the author and co-author from Post 17.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: I can answer that. Charlie O'Leary, Resolutions. Post 227 made the -- came up with the resolution, but the author of the resolution was not able to be here, so the district commander appointed the district adjutant to speak in his place.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Okay. So my next question is if there's only one or two individuals, we don't know how many people can quote, unquote, not make it on Sunday due to what's in this resolution.

What prohibits -- if those individuals are delegates for the convention, what prohibits those delegates to give members their voting rights that are going to attend the convention?

Don't shake your head because the post decides who the delegates are going to be.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Would somebody like to yield to John Bloxom?

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: John Bloxom, Post 126. There is a thing called Rules of the DEC. In there, we describe what's going to happen -- I won't say "we." It describes what's going to happen at the election time and how it's to be done.

Each individual does not vote. It is the delegate chairman that votes, unless someone from that post challenges his vote. Then it goes to a voice vote by delegate, and they must be present in order to vote.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Dale Haynes.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: I have a point of clarification --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Oh.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: -- for the stenographer because some information is wrong.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: What?

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Andrew is a Vice Commander that I put in charge. He's not an adjutant. Since we're being recorded, I just want to clarify Andrew is a Vice Commander at 227, not the Adjutant, for the record, and the Resolutions Committee for District 1B, so

just for clarification. Sorry.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Dale Haynes, Judge Advocate. I just want to try to clarify something. The comment was made that this body is the one who decides what goes before the convention and what does not go before the convention as far as resolutions. I'll admit my ignorance on that. I've never found that in the Constitution. If somebody could find that for me and let me know, I would appreciate it.

And what we're saying is we say that the American Legion is the members, but then we're saying that we're going to be able to block anything that the members want to discuss as far as resolutions at their convention. I, personally, have a problem with that.

Whichever way you want to go on it, that's up to you. I know we're doing it the way we've always done it, but like I said, if somebody could find in the Constitution where we're supposed to block the resolutions and not have the members have a chance to vote on it, especially after they've had it sent out to them, I wish you would show that to me.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Jim Quinn.

DEC REP QUINN: May I address the Judge Advocate?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: You cannot do that. You must address me.

DEC REP QUINN: I'll talk to you then.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: There you go.

DEC REP QUINN: I think what we have here is a dispute on the authority of who has the final say or who has the say on how the convention is run. That's this body.

This body, in the Rules of the DEC -- the Detachment Commander just stated the Rules of the DEC, that this body has the authority to hold the election of officers and to make the schedule of the convention. Pardon me. I'm getting tired.

So I don't think that we're shortchanging the membership by not taking it to the floor because it's already been established by the Rules of the DEC that we have the responsibility in this body to make that decision.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: May I respond to that?

I need just a second to look that up.

First of all, let me clarify. I think what John was quoting was the Constitution. He said "Rules of the DEC." I think he was talking about the Constitution.

Secondly, let me clarify the fact the Rules of the DEC are just that, they're the rules of the DEC. They're

not the rules of the Department. The Rules of the DEC governs how we do business.

If you'll give me just a few minutes, I'll go back over and look at how we're going to go in and how you're supposed to do the schedule. I'm not saying that we cannot change that. I'm just saying that we have a resolution, and we're saying we're going to block this resolution. We've got two other resolutions. They have nothing to do with the schedule. I will look up the schedule in just a minute.

But the bottom line on it is what we're saying is we may like it or dislike it. In the past, if we dislike it, it never gets to the floor. We've already sent these all out.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Real quick, I think there's a little confusion here. This is administrative. This is not something that needs to be done. Again, with the rules, we are the governing body for this particular section.

Yes, sir?

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: Just a point of clarification for everybody, no one says block it. The Resolution Committee Chairman has the requirement to address any resolution that we've brought before this body before the convention. It doesn't say

that he has to vote on it. What he has to do is to tell them the disposition of the resolutions.

Even at National, also all resolutions do not get briefed to the convention. They are determined by the Committee as to what happens to them. Some of them are sent back to the originator.

What we have to do is say, "We accept your resolution. We understand it. It has been given to the DEC for action." You didn't block it. You're telling them what happened to their resolution. It doesn't mean it isn't going to happen. It's not blocked. But he has the ability to know somebody looked at it, somebody recognized it, and that the executive committee is going to make a decision.

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: And, John, what I'm saying is every post that shows up tomorrow is expecting to see three resolutions to be voted on.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes. And they will -- you've got to understand what you're saying. It's not to see the resolutions, but they will be given the determination of what this body did for that resolution. It's not that we're not going to tell them what happened. This body makes that decision for this particular one. A couple of them are a little different, but for this particular one, we make this decision

because it's administrative.

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: Bobby Stewart, Department Chaplain. I sat in on this Resolution Committee hearing yesterday, and from what I'm understanding, they're wanting to change the election to Saturday instead of Sunday because people want to go to church.

Well, I'm an ordained minister. I pastor a church. I make arrangements with my church that I'm going to be at the American Legion Convention because I see the seriousness of conducting business for the American Legion. My church has wholeheartedly given me permission to be absent Sunday. I can do that one Sunday out of the year. I also miss a Sunday when we have Mid-Winter Conference because I'm sold on the American Legion.

If we change the election to Saturday, does that mean that we also have the installation of the new officers on Saturday? If that be the case, we're moving all of the business of Sunday to Saturday, and what's the sense of staying around Sunday for just a DEC meeting?

So my opinion is one Sunday out of the year is not going to hurt us to be here, because a lot of you, I guarantee, will be at the lake instead of church. That's just the preacher coming out of me.

(Applause)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is there any further discussion? Is there any further discussion?

The floor recognize Eric Grubbs.

DISTRICT COMMANDER GRUBBS: Eric Grubbs, 5B District Commander. If the resolution is passed, is that a change to the Constitution and By-laws? Is it a change to the DEC? And what if we decide, well, next year we want to have the elections on Sunday?

POST COMMANDER THOMAS: Point of order.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Hang on. I have a point of order.

Steve Thomas.

POST COMMANDER THOMAS: Steve Thomas, Post 178 Commander. That would be a change to the Constitution and By-Laws because right now the date is not designated. So, if you're designating it as Saturday, you are now changing your constitution to that day.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Somebody else had a hand up.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Time to vote.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Hold on just a moment. Slow down. I know you want to get out of here. I want to get out of here just as bad, trust me.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: Who establishes the agenda for the American Legion Summer

Convention?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Rick does.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: No, he doesn't. The chairman of the DEC. I've got to make sure I say that right because it's not the commander, it is the chairman of the DEC. That's the way it's written.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: Does it matter whether I start on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, and end on Saturday?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: It's left up to the discretion.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: What does matter is who will attend. The earlier I start it, the fewer people are going to attend.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It doesn't work.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Let me explain something to you. He's right. Because we had this -- John, about six years ago?

-- where we went from Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday --

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: And ended on Saturday.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: -- and ended on Saturday. This body at that time -- not you guys, understand that. That body at that time decided to shift

those four days to the right, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: And it was all about who attended.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: Our numbers went up when we went to Sunday instead of ending on Saturday.

DEC REP QUINN: Because you can get the whole convention on Saturday and Sunday --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I apologize. They should be standing up. I realize that. I'm trying to get here.

Dale, did you have any luck yet?

DEPARTMENT JA HAYNES: Yes and no.

What I did find is it says the Department Convention shall annually, at a time and place fixed by the action of the preceding Department Convention -- of the said preceding convention --

Well, anyway, it says the Department Convention is the one who is supposed to make that decision, and if they do not do it, then the Department Executive Committee does it. I was thinking they're talking about the agenda.

The bottom line on it, folks, if you don't like it,

you can encourage your posts to vote against it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Jack, do you have anything else to add to that?

DEC REP DAY: No, I --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: You covered it? All right. You got something now?

DEC REP DAY: Yeah. Move to vote.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Move to vote. Good man, Jack.

I'll entertain a motion. The motion is for Resolution One, Modification of the Oklahoma Summer Convention Voting Schedule.

All in favor, say "aye."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The no vote has it.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN:

"The American Legion

"Davis-Moore Post 164

"Department of Oklahoma

"Resolution

"Subject: Recommendation to Rewrite Article XII of the Department By-Laws to Clarify and Standardize

Disciplinary Procedures at Post Level

"Submitted by: Davis-Moore Post 164.

"Date: April 8, 2025

"WHEREAS, the American Legion is founded upon principles of justice, fairness, and due process, which must be reflected in all levels of its operation, including disciplinary proceedings; and,

"WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the Department of Oklahoma of the American Legion to provide clear and consistent guidance on disciplinary matters to its posts in order to prevent confusion, ensure due process, and protect the Department from potential liability arising from vague, insufficient, or conflicting by-laws; and,

"WHEREAS, Article XII of the Department of Oklahoma By-Laws currently provides only general guidance on disciplinary procedures, leaving significant room for misinterpretation and inconsistent application across posts; and,

"WHEREAS, the lack of specificity in Article XII of the Department By-Laws has led to procedural confusion and has, in some cases, undermined the rights of members and the rights of members and the integrity of disciplinary actions; and,

"WHEREAS, many posts lack formal training in interpreting by-laws or implementing parliamentary

procedure as outlined in Robert's Rules of Order, further compounding inconsistencies in disciplinary matters; and,

"WHEREAS, it is of the utmost importance that both posts and departments handle disciplinary actions with the highest level of care, integrity, and respect for due process, recognizing that such actions can significantly affect a member's reputation, standing, and personal life; and that failure to adhere to clearly defined procedures can result in unfair treatment, unintentional harm, and a loss of trust within the organization; and that posts must be held to a standard that ensures all disciplinary actions are conducted with fairness, transparency, and strict adherence to establish rules to prevent mistreatment or unjust outcomes; and,

"WHEREAS, disciplinary procedures should remain consistent between the post level and the Department Executive Committee level to ensure fairness, clarity, and uniform application of standards across the organization; and,

"WHEREAS, Section H of Rules of the DEC, which outline disciplinary processes and protections, provides a well-established framework that should also govern post-level disciplinary actions to maintain procedural integrity, organizational cohesion, and continuity; and,

"WHEREAS, Article XII of the Department Constitution

establishes a hierarchy of authority for procedural matters, stating that meetings of the Department Executive Committee and all subordinate component bodies of the American Legion shall be governed first by the Rules of the Department Executive Committee; and when such rules do not address a particular issue, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall serve as the governing authority; thereby making Article XII the formal mechanism by which the organization defaults to Robert's Rules in the absence of more specific departmental- or committee-level procedures; and,

"WHEREAS, a clearer more comprehensive rewrite of Article XII of the Department By-Laws would provide posts with reliable and standardized framework for initiating, managing, and adjudicating disciplinary actions, thereby strengthening accountability, consistency, and fairness; now, therefore, be it:

"RESOLVED by Davis-Moore Post 164, Department of Oklahoma, in regular meeting assembled on --"

What's the correct date?

"-- that this post formally urges the Department of Oklahoma to undertake a full and thorough rewrite of Article XII of the Department By-Laws with the goal of clearly outlining disciplinary procedures in a step-by-step, uniform manner; and, be it further:

"RESOLVED that the revised Article XII of the By-Laws by written in a manner that is simple, clear, and to the point, providing unambiguous guidance to posts and members alike, and that it explicitly establish a hierarchy of procedural authority, beginning first with the National Constitution and By-Laws, then the Department Constitution and By-Laws, then Rules of the Department Executive Committee, then approving and adopting the Operations Guide and Manual of Ceremonies as official guidance for the practice and procedure in the suspension or expulsion of a member, ensuring alignment with established traditions, due process, and organizational standards. The order of precedence for the Operations Guide and Manual Ceremonies as it relates to member discipline shall be immediately following the Department Constitution and By-Laws and before Robert's Rules of Order and finally deferring to Robert's Rules of Order when necessary to supplement or clarify procedures not otherwise addressed; and:

"RESOLVED that all posts shall use Section H of the Rules of the Department Executive Committee (DEC) as the guiding framework for conducting post-level disciplinary actions, ensuring consistency with department-wide standards and due process procedures; and:

"RESOLVED that Article XII of the Department By-Laws

need not be encumbered with detailed disciplinary procedures already addressed in Robert's Rules of Order and Rules of the DEC, but shall instead include concise, step-by-step reference to where such procedures are located; and:

"RESOLVED that all posts should establish a standing Disciplinary Committee responsible for overseeing, tracking, and handling all matters related to discipline within their respective posts; and, be it further:

"RESOLVED that this committee shall operate in accordance with Article XII of the Department By-Laws, Section H of the Rules of the DEC, Robert's Rules of Order, and any applicable Department guidance, ensuring due process, documentation, and consistency in disciplinary actions; and, be it further:

"RESOLVED that the Department shall develop and conduct regular training for all posts to ensure proper understanding and implementation of disciplinary procedures, including the use of Section H of the Rules of the DEC, as guidance for hearings, as well as for proper use of Robert's Rules of Order as applicable; and, be it further:

"RESOLVED that such training shall equip post leadership with the knowledge and tools necessary to conduct fair, consistent, and procedurally sound

disciplinary hearings when required; and:

"RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the District Commander, Department Executive Committee, and Department Judge Advocate for review and consideration at the next scheduled Department meeting or convention."

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: At this time, I will take a motion for resolution number two.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: Charlie O'Leary, Resolutions Committee. I move that we forward resolution number two to the floor for a vote.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Do I have a second?

DEC REP DAY: Jack Day, 8 Bravo. I second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is there any discussion?

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: Charlie O'Leary of Resolutions Committee. The resolution is in the appropriate format. It meets the requirements for that. It is not a National resolution, and it was sent out 60 days before the Department Convention for consideration by the membership across the state, and the posts have had an opportunity to decide how they want to vote. And the recommendation of the Committee is that it be sent to the floor and, with an up or down vote, let the blue hats make the decision.

DISTRICT COMMANDER HARRIS: Mike Harris, District 5A Commander. Page two, paragraph three "RESOLVED," second line, there's no date in this. It says, "insert date." So this is the first problem.

The second problem is there's no signatures and dates from the commander of the post that this came from or a second signature on it.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: I have those written paperwork.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: I'm not going to talk about it. I put all of the comments that came out and sent that to Charlie, and he's not sharing them with you. I will not recreate this problem.

This is not a valid resolution. It does not meet the procedural formatting and wording that is required by the National guide on resolution development and writing. It contains more than one subject when it's required to only have one.

After that, I won't touch it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: NECman O'Leary, is there any other comments that need to be made that came from the Constitution and By-Laws?

RESOLUTION COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: Not that I can recall. This is not going to be a National resolution.

It will only affect Department.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Are you sure on that? Because I can remember a couple of things in there that required the National to make something happen. Therefore, it cannot be done that way.

It also looked to me whenever I read it that there's three different sections of that in one resolution. Those three sections should have been brought out and served as a specific resolution for each one of them.

So are we sure about what was said?

Is there any further discussion?

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Can you tell me where you see that? I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: It said that "National is required to." Therefore, you're giving -- for us, we're giving a direction to them.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Can you help me find that?

(Crosstalk)

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Second page. Sorry.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We can only write a resolution that affects our Department. It then needs to go to National, but we have to do this first.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: I got it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Jack Day.

DEC REP DAY: Jack Day, 8 Bravo. I move we take a vote.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All right. The discussion is closed.

All in favor of this resolution moving forward, say "aye."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All in favor of sending this back to this post, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All that want to cancel this resolution -- no, I can't do that. I'm sorry. I jumped ahead of myself there.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: If you're not going to forward it to the floor, you have to at least tell them where it's going, going back to the post for rewrite and making sure that it's not a personal interpretation of what three other sources contain.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes. We will --

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 153. Didn't National just release --

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: A trial manual? Was that what you were about to say?

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 153, 2B DEC. Didn't National just release what this should be in?

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: They're working on a trial manual, yes.

DEC REP DEER: Then why are we trying to countermand what National is doing?

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: We don't.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Hang on. Let's do this offline. Let's go ahead and get this resolution determined.

Right now this resolution is going back to the post.

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yes.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: We can discuss all the rest of this stuff offline.

I'll give you one opportunity.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: I don't know if it's a point of administration or what to call it, but -- Karen Cruice, District 1B -- we were supposed to have a banquet at seven o'clock, and there were guests invited -- at six o'clock, and there were guests invited, and they're starving, and I just need to tell my post what to do with their people.

Are we canceling it tonight? What are we doing so that I can tell my post?

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: I'm going to give

you a partial answer, Karen. The reception took place. The presentation of the membership awards that were scheduled for tonight will have to be rescheduled and have not yet been done so.

Are you telling me there are people who can't stay over for tomorrow?

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: I don't know about their guests. They're wondering about going to dinner.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Well, we weren't offering dinner to begin with.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: No. They want to go away.

Are they waiting for you --

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Well, I would.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Okay. I didn't want to send them away and then you be waiting for them. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: There are no further activities planned for this evening.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Thank you. That's all I have.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT REDDEN: Resolution number three.

"Frank H. Collings Post 111

"Resolution: To Provide Acceptable Youth Protection

Policy for Youth and Adults

"WHEREAS, it is important that the American Legion develop a program to ensure and maintain a safe communication link connecting the American Legion with all of its programs dealing with the youth;

"WHEREAS, the youth programs in question include scouting, Oratorical, Boys State, Junior Shooting, Junior Baseball, and any other activities involving youth;

"WHEREAS, The American Legion Department of Oklahoma and Frank H. Collings Post 111 of Edmond, Oklahoma, desire the utmost security and protection of today's youth; and,

"WHEREAS, in keeping with those desires, we must maintain an acceptable and safe communication link between the adults and the youth in the program;

"WHEREAS, the American Legion Youth Protection Policy should state that contact must be gender specific. One gender may not have communication with a person of another gender without a member of that gender being present; there be it:

"RESOLVED all communication with youth, either verbally or physically, will be conducted in the presence of at least two adults or multiples of youth;

"RESOLVED by Frank H. Collings Post 111, the American Legion, Department of Oklahoma, Corporation,

that the National offices of the American Legion take the actions necessary to change the Eagle Scout of the Year application and other forms to conform to the policy of having an appropriate witness for all actions involving communications between adults and youth under the age of 18;

"RESOLVED by Frank H. Collings Post 111, the American Legion, Department of Oklahoma, that the Eagle Scout of the Year application and other publications also include contact information for the parent/guardian;

"Approved/Attested by legal authority of Post Adjutant, Frank H. Collings Post 111, as being approved by a vote of a quorum of Post 111 members present and registered thereat, and witnessed by the Commander, Frank H. Collings Post 111, and recommended for review and consideration at the next District Convention scheduled in 2024."

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: I would like to have a motion on resolution number three to provide acceptable Youth Protection Policy for youth and adults.

Do I have a motion?

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: Charlie O'Leary, Resolutions Committee Co-Chairman. I move for acceptance of the resolution and that it be sent to the floor for a vote by the blue hats.

This motion was sent to Constitution and By-Laws for comments. It was also discussed in the Americanism Committee meeting yesterday and approved unanimously.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Do I have a second?

DISTRICT COMMANDER REES: Jim Rees, 6B Commander. Second.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is there any discussion?

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: Charlie O'Leary, Resolutions Committee. This is a resolution to provide liability protection to the Department of Oklahoma.

National has a policy of -- a general policy but does not have a specific policy regarding scouting. The recommendation from the Americanism Committee for this resolution was that this should be passed and then additional resolutions of a similar ilk for Oratorical, for Junior Shooting Sports, for Girls Softball, and for Boys Baseball.

This protects the Department from liability of suit. If something happens at a youth event and a lawyer gets ahold of it, they will sue everybody. They sue American Legion, National. They sue Oklahoma Department. They sue the post. They sue the individual.

Right now the Department does not have a liability

statement or something stating what should be done to protect these youth that are engaged in these programs, and this would forestall a liability issue that would come up.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is there any other discussion?

BOYS STATE ASST. DIRECTOR LOOPER: Bart Looper, Squadron 5, Boys State Assistant Director. I would like to have some conversation about the first "resolved" clause because it does not state anything about conversations between young people and medical professionals during the week. I know, with Boys State, we're different since we're there for the week, but in either here or tomorrow, if this is passed and put to the floor, we need to have some conversation about having it amended to at least include something saying "excluding licensed medical and counseling professionals and pre-event registration conversations" because we have a substantial amount of young men who call into the Boys State phone number to talk about registering, because they're responsible for doing that.

So we need to know if we're going to be confined to say, "Sorry. We can't talk to you. Your parent will have to call." And that's going to cause some problems that we'll need to get out in front of if the body is

going to require us to do that.

But I can say from being on the Boys Nation staff also, that that's how it is on the Boys Nation registration. During the week, as we do at Boys State, nobody is allowed to be alone with a delegate, period, end of story, except for medical personnel, because of HIPAA, and the same thing with licensed counselor, because of HIPAA, they have to be allowed to do that.

And on the Boys Nation side, it's the same thing. National has had me talking to multiple young men in getting them registered for Boys Nation, just me talking to them, also me talking to their parents. But on the National level, that's how it is there.

So it needs to have some caveat for both pre-session registration and for medical and counseling personnel.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Yes. Charlie O'Leary.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: Charlie O'Leary, Resolutions. Point well taken. This could be amended from the floor.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Curtis Deer.

DEC REP DEER: Curtis Deer, 153, 2B. This is not in proper format. Where's the "and" after first "whereas"? Only one of them has it. The bottom doesn't

even have the dates put in it. Why didn't the committee catch this stuff and fix it?

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: The original did. With the "and," that may have been missed, but the --

DEC REP DEER: But instead of "youth," period, it should have been "youth," comma, "and," and then you go to the next "whereas." And only one of them has the "and" in there. And then "there be it," well, that's not quite correct, either.

I mean, I'm not an expert on this, and I know this is wrong. So I'm trying to figure out why are we even bringing this out if you can't even get the forms right. I'm baffled. I don't have a problem with youth protection, but that's...

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Chris Sherbourne.

DETACHMENT SENIOR VC SHERBOURNE: Chris Sherbourne, Senior Vice Commander, Detachment of Oklahoma.

Mr. Commander, there is already a youth manual that is put out by the National American Legion that spells all of this out already. We had a similar resolution last year that was pushed away because they were trying to change something that we already have documentation from National about how this works.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes John Bloxom.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE BLOXOM: I agree with the resolution. I also agree with Curtis that it is not in the proper format, but the content and the intent of the resolution is good.

It does not need to start here where we start writing stuff. Most of this stuff exists at National already. We do not have the authority to direct National to change anything. We can only recommend it. In order to do that, we can fix the problems of that resolution, put it in the proper form and formats that National requires and then send it forward.

We need to send this to National. They can fix it, but we've got to get it into the right form. National prescribes forms and formats that we must provide their resolutions to them. If we don't, they'll simply send it back without action.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Charlie O'Leary.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEEMAN O'LEARY: That can be done after a vote, up or down, tomorrow. That can be done. We have all of these forms now.

The important thing to point out is that this is going to be a Department document that will be on file with the Adjutant and at state headquarters to prevent a

lawsuit against Department if something comes up.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEEMAN BLOXOM: I agree with everything they've said in there, but we need to give it to the guys that have the power to fix it.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Steve Thomas.

POST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER: Steve Thomas, Post 178. So grammatical errors can be approved on the floor. They don't have to be, necessarily, approved by the time they get there. It can be approved on the floor with amendments so we're not sitting here discussing back and forth.

We all know the grammatical is incorrect and the punctuation is incorrect. That's a moot point. We can approve it here if you guys want to send it forward on its basis. If you don't, kill it. If you do, send it through, and we can fix it with an amendment on the floor, for time constraints.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: As long as you don't change the intent.

(Crosstalk)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: The floor recognizes Karen Cruice.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: I move that we call a vote.

DEC REP QUINN: I'll second the motion.

DISTRICT COMMANDER CRUICE: Jim Quinn seconds.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Jim Quinn seconded the motion.

All in favor of taking the resolution three to provide acceptable Youth Protection Policy for youth and adults to the floor, say "aye."

MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Aye.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All opposed, same sign.

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Good.

All right. Anything else for the Good of the Legion?

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Is there any further business to come before our meeting?

(No response)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: All rise. Uncover.

Chaplain, will you please give us a closing prayer?

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: Yes.

God, we can say with clarity and sincerity this evening, thank God it's over.

(Laughter)

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN STEWART: And with that being said, now may you grant us the determination to go

forward from this meeting promoting the American Legion and all of its programs.

I ask your blessings, not only upon this DEC, but upon every post within this state, upon all of the leadership, that you would grant us a sincere desire to make the American Legion, Department of Oklahoma, number one.

We ask these things now in Christ's name, Amen.

COLLECTIVE GROUP: Amen.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Sergeant-at-Arms, recover the POW/MIA flag.

(WHEREUPON, the POW/MIA chair cover was recovered.)

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOODS: Re-cover.

Before I finish this right here, I've got something personal I want to say to you. Thank you, each and every one of you. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to do this. There is not a person in this room that I have anything against. None. You have done your job at the best of your ability, and I thank you for it. But as I have told you in the past, this department leads. We do not follow.

Till we meet again, let us remember our obligation to our community, state, and nation can only be fulfilled by the faithful obligation and performance of all duties

of citizenship. Let service to our nation and state and community be ever a main objective of the American Legion and its members. Let us be forever watchful of the honor of our country, our organization, and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of justice, freedom, and democracy.

HAND, SALUTE; TWO.

I now declare Department Executive Committee number five for the '24-'25 season closed.

(WHEREUPON, the 5th DEC meeting, held July 11, 2025, was concluded at approximately 19:48 hours.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF OKLAHOMA)
) SS:
COUNTY OF MUSKOGEE)

I, Jessyca Guerra, Certified Shorthand Reporter within and for the State of Oklahoma, do hereby certify that the meeting held July 11, 2025, at 3:00 p.m., at 777 Grand Casino Boulevard, Shawnee, Oklahoma, was taken by me in stenotype and thereafter transcribed by computer is true and correct; that I am not an attorney for or a relative of either party or otherwise interested in this action.

WITNESS MY HAND THIS 12th day of August, 2025.

Jessyca Guerra, CSR #2027

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